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Sam vows to uphold Dr Sun Yat-sen's spirit in governance

Tony Wong

Yesterday marked the 160th anniversary of the birth of Dr Sun Yat-sen, the great forerunner of the Chinese democratic revolution.

During yesterday's opening ceremony of a photo exhibition commemorating the date, Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai delivered a speech calling for Macau's civil society to carry forward Sun's patriotic, revolutionary, and enterprising spirit while underlining the local government's commitment to promoting patriotism, telling good stories about China and Macau to the world, and forging the greatest possible consensus at home and abroad in support of the cause of "peaceful reunification and 'One Country, Two Systems'" – the central authorities' basic principles for resolving the Taiwan question.

In addition to the photo exhibition held at the Macao Cultural Centre (CCM) in Nape, the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Government – starting this month – is also hosting various other activities and events to commemorate the 160th anniversary of the birth of Dr Sun – an outstanding patriot and national hero.

Yesterday's ceremony also marked the formal commencement of the various other commemorative activities and events.



Dignitaries are about to cut the ribbon during yesterday's opening ceremony of the photo exhibition commemorating the 160th anniversary of the birth of Dr Sun Yat-sen, at the Macao Cultural Centre (CCM) in Nape – Court of Final Appeal (TUI) President Song Man Lei (from left to right), People's Liberation Army (PLA) Macau Garrison Commander Chen Wensheng, Central People's Government Liaison Office Director Zheng Xincong, Chief Executive Sam Hou Fai, Foreign Ministry Commissioner Bian Lixin, Legislative Assembly (AL) President André Cheong Weng Chon, and Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam.

– Photo: Tony Wong

Born on November 12, 1866, Dr Sun led the republican Revolution of 1911 more than a century ago to abolish the absolute monarchy that had ruled China for thousands of years. He died of gallbladder cancer in Beijing on March 12, 1925, aged 58.

In his speech, Sam noted that Dr Sun dedicated his life to the revolutionary cause, resolving to save the nation and its people. Dr Sun championed the cause of democratic republicanism, put forward the Three Principles of the People, and led the Revolution of 1911, which overthrew the autocratic monarchy, ushered in the modern national democratic revolution, and spurred the ideological emancipation of the Chinese nation, Sam noted, adding that his achievements are immortalised in the annals of history.

Sam said that revisiting the principles advocated by Dr Sun and learning from his noble spirit – characterised by his love for the motherland, his devotion to the people, his pursuit of truth, and his tenacity in the face of hardships – is of great and far-reaching significance for consolidating the great unity of the Chinese people both at home and abroad, developing the broadest possible patriotic united front, and advancing the great cause of national reunification.

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Trump calls for Apple's Cook to replace Huang at Nvidia

Danny Kemp

WASHINGTON, DC – US President Donald Trump said yesterday that former Apple CEO Tim Cook should replace Jensen Huang at Nvidia, after Huang quit over revelations of two affairs, including one with an alleged Chinese spy.

"Now that Nvidia CEO JENSEN HUANG, who has done a fantastic job, has resigned, there is only one man to take his place – TIM COOK of Apple," Trump said on his Truth Social network.

"A Legend replaces a Legend!"

Trump has no formal say in who should run chip giant Nvidia, which is at the centre of the AI revolution, but his extraordinary intervention underscores his close ties to both Huang and Cook.

During his second presidency, Trump has treated Nvidia co-founder Huang as a close adviser, even taking him on board Air Force One for a state visit to China in May.

After allegations emerged about Huang's ties to Chinese businesswoman Alice Huang, Trump this week defended the Nvidia boss and said he had no idea Alice Huang was allegedly spying for Beijing.

Trump added that Jensen Huang, who is not related to Alice Huang, was "suffering greatly" and described the Taiwanese-born tech boss as "an amazing guy."

– AFP



A young ethnic Miao woman participates in a celebration activity of traditional Miao New Year in Leishan County of Qiandongnan Miao and Dong Autonomous Prefecture, Guizhou Province, yesterday. Tens of thousands of Miao people gathered in the county yesterday to celebrate the Miao New Year through grand parades, intangible cultural heritage displays, and Lusheng antiphonal singing. In 2008, the Miao New Year was listed as a national-level intangible cultural heritage. – Xinhua

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China, US maintain close communication on tariff cuts, trade, investment: MOC

China and the United States are maintaining close communication on implementing reciprocal tariff cuts covering around US$30 billion worth of imports on each side, the Ministry of Commerce (MOC) said yesterday. *– Story on p. 8*

One dead, 4 wounded in Washington shooting: police

One person was killed and four wounded in a shooting at and outside a fitness centre in an upscale residential neighbourhood of downtown Washington yesterday, police said. *– Story on p. 11*

Spanish parliament passes housing measures after protests, strike

The Spanish parliament yesterday passed measures restricting evictions and aiming to make housing more affordable, after a general strike and weeks of protests over the issue which catalysed a snap election. *– Story on p. 12*

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Respect the Independent Adjudication of the Judiciary; Safeguard the Legal Order

Commentary by Lok Wai Kin
President of the Union of Macau Scholars
Adjunct Professor, University of Macau

The Law on Safeguarding National Security of the Macao Special Administrative Region plays a vital role in protecting national security and maintaining social stability in Macao; it is an indispensable legal safeguard. Implementing the National Security Law requires not only that every individual fulfil their obligation to uphold the law, but also that criminal acts violating it be penalised. Therefore, the courts trying cases that endanger national security in accordance with the Law on Safeguarding National Security is an inevitable requirement of enforcing the law.

The courts' independent exercise of their adjudicative functions and rendering of judgments in accordance with the law is a principle established by the Macao Basic Law, as well as the cornerstone of the normal functioning of Macao's judicial system. The judiciary serves as the ultimate bulwark safeguarding the rule of law in Macao. Were this bulwark to be compromised, Macao's legal order would ultimately cease to exist, directly undermining social stability and the fundamental interests of its residents. Nevertheless, certain political forces, both domestic and foreign, attempt to apply their habitual double standards—disregarding objective criminal facts and express statutory provisions—to vilify lawful court trials as political persecution. Their aim is to attack Macao's National Security Law, disparage Macao's judicial system, and interfere with lawful judicial proceedings. In light of this, Macao residents must heighten their vigilance, distinguish right from wrong, resist all words and deeds intended to smear, attack, or influence lawful judicial trials, and shoulder the responsibility of upholding Macao's legal and judicial systems.

Adhering to the principle of independent judicial adjudication requires supporting judges in trying cases according to the law, free from unlawful interference. The key to respecting and upholding



Undated file photo of Lok Wai Kin – Photo courtesy of macaudata.mo

judicial decisions lies in whether a judge's trial strictly adheres to the law. When trying offences that endanger national security, the focus must be on whether the proceedings strictly comply with the Law on Safeguarding National Security. Given that the Law on Safeguarding National Security expressly prohibits acts of subverting state power, including attempts to overthrow or undermine the fundamental system established by the Constitution, judges ought to accept indictments and conduct trials regarding acts that endanger national security in accordance with the law. This is both the inherent duty of judges and a fundamental requirement of the rule of law.

The French jurist Montesquieu once observed that liberty is the right to do whatever the laws permit, and if a citizen could do what the laws forbid, they would no longer possess liberty. Therefore, firstly, there is no such thing in the world as unrestrained, arbitrary freedom; there is only freedom under the law. Secondly, the law is both the prerequisite for freedom and its boundary. Once legal prohibitions are breached, order collapses and liberty ceases to exist. Liberty represents rights within the bounds permitted by law; only within that permitted scope can individual rights and freedoms be legally protected—otherwise, they will be subject to legal sanctions. Law and liberty form an organic unity rather than being mutually antagonistic; seeking freedom does not mean dispensing with the law, nor should liberty be understood one-sidedly as exemption from legal restraint. The West not only speaks in this manner, but also acts accordingly. Western theory and practice demonstrate that judgments rendered on the basis of unlawful acts and in accordance with statutory provisions ought to command the respect and support of society; under no circumstances should the orchestration of public pressure outside the courtroom to interfere with judicial proceedings be permitted.

As the ancient Chinese proverb goes, "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you." We must therefore eliminate all interference, safeguard the rule of law in Macao, uphold the principle of independent trials in accordance with the law, maintain Macao's judicial authority and credibility, and successfully build a "law-based Macao".

End

Editor's Note: The translation of the commentary from Chinese was arranged and edited by the *Post*. The Chinese original text was previously published in *Macao Daily News*.

Strictly Upholding the Bottom Line of the Rule of Law and Safeguarding Its Core Values

Commentary by Leonel Alberto Alves

Member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and President of the General Assembly of the Council of Macanese Communities

Recently, the Lower Court of the Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) lawfully convicted Au Kam San on three counts of offences, including 'subversion of state power', and sentenced him to 12 years and six months' imprisonment. We note that throughout the legal proceedings, as the defendant did not retain a lawyer of his own choosing, the SAR court appointed a defence lawyer for him as required by law; the court-appointed counsel, who was accepted and recognised by the defendant, maintained close communication and contact with him to conduct his defence, and the defendant also fully exercised his legal right of defence. Furthermore, the court duly approved applications for regular family visits to the defendant. This series of arrangements fully demonstrates the fairness and impartiality of the judicial proceedings.

Punishing acts that endanger national security in accordance with the law is an essential requirement for strictly upholding the bottom line of the rule of law and safeguarding its core values. The SAR court's lawful verdict in Macao's first national security case is of great



Undated file photo of Leonel Alves – Photo courtesy of Macau Lawyers Association (AAM)

significance for the SAR in earnestly fulfilling its constitutional responsibility to safeguard national security and in maintaining Macao's long-term prosperity and stability. The legal system of the Macao SAR has always upheld the principle of protecting human rights, and the rights and freedoms enjoyed by residents under the law are better realised in a safe and stable environment. Preventing, suppressing, and punishing criminal acts that endanger national security in accordance with the law serves not only to safeguard national sovereignty, security, and development interests, but also to better protect the safety, fundamental rights, and freedoms of Macao residents and other persons in Macao. All Macao residents and people from all walks of life who abide by the law, refrain from engaging in activities that endanger national security, such as acts of separatism or colluding with external forces, and carry out normal economic and trade cooperation, academic exchanges, and people-to-people interactions have no need to worry about breaching the national security law. Certain overseas organisations and individuals have made irresponsible remarks regarding the verdict, which constitutes unwarranted interference in the SAR judiciary's independent and lawful exercise of its functions and duties. We express our strong indignation and firm opposition to this.

Together with all sectors of society, we will actively publicise and promote the Constitution, the Basic Law of the Macao SAR, and the Law on Safeguarding National Security. We will also continuously enhance Macao residents' awareness of the rule of law, support the Macao SAR as always in fulfilling its constitutional responsibility to safeguard national security, fully and accurately implement the Law on Safeguarding National Security, and resolutely safeguard national sovereignty, security, and development interests.

End

Editor's Note: The translation of the commentary from Chinese was arranged and edited by the *Post*. The Chinese original text was previously published in *Macao Daily News*.

Macau Catholic Centre to open its new high-rise Nov 27

Khalel Vallo

The Macau Catholic Centre at the junction of Avenida da Praia Grande (南灣大馬路) and Rua do Campo (水坑尾街) will officially open its new 17-storey building, which includes a hotel, on November 27, following nearly five years of reconstruction, with two exhibitions also opening to the public as the Catholic Diocese of Macau marks its 450th anniversary, according to a statement by the centre yesterday.

The inauguration ceremony will take place at 4:00 p.m. at the centre, the statement said, adding that the project got off the ground in 2021 but faced delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic, construction setbacks and official approval procedures.

The opening will coincide with the 450th anniversary of the establishment of the Catholic Diocese of Macau, marking a new milestone in its work in pastoral care, evangelisation, education and social services, the statement said.

The diocese was set up on January 23, 1576.

Two exhibitions, "Who is the Man on the Shroud?" and "Witness to the Heritage, Mission in the World", will also open at the centre to the public on the same day, the statement noted, adding that another exhibition, "We Build Future with An Eye to the Past", related to the diocese's 450th anniversary, is scheduled to open at a later date.

The new high-rise comprises hotel accommodation, dining facilities, a lecture hall, meeting rooms, exhibition spaces and multi-purpose activity rooms, the statement underlined.

According to the statement, the facilities will serve tourists, pilgrims and local residents, while providing space for gatherings and exchanges. It said the centre would continue its longstanding mission of connecting the Catholic Church with the wider community through evangelisation and social services. ■



Pedestrians and vehicles pass by the Macau Catholic Centre at the junction of Avenida da Praia Grande and Rua do Campo last night.
– Photo: Khalel Vallo

Startup Fest Macao opens with focus on technology, sustainable innovation

Khalel Vallo

The inaugural Startup Fest Macao 2026 opened at the Macau Tower Convention & Entertainment Centre yesterday, bringing together startups, technology companies and investors for a three-day business-to-business expo, with sustainability and smart hospitality among the topics highlighted by Macau Hotel Association Vice Chairman Rutger Verschuren.

Organised by the Macao Startup Club and co-organised by 369 Co-op Town, the event features 60 startups and established companies from the Chinese mainland, Hong Kong, Macau, China's Taiwan region, Malaysia, Thailand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

According to a statement by the organisers yesterday, the expo is supported by more than 30 organisations, including the Economic and Technological Development Bureau (DSEDT), the Commerce and Investment Promotion Institute (IPIM) and the Macao Government Tourism Office (MGTO). Organisers expect more than 2,500 visits, with a programme featuring 12 summit forums, seven thematic seminars and around 50 local and non-local speakers, the statement noted.

In his welcome remarks at a business lunch at Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau in Nape yesterday, Macao Startup Club President James Si Tou said that government support had helped businesses and startups of different types emerge, contributing to a more diversified and mature entrepreneurial ecosystem. He said the organisers hoped to continue working with the government and industry to create opportunities for local entrepreneurs.

Macao Startup Club Chairman John Ku (顧銘恆) said that the expo aimed to connect industries, technology and products, helping businesses apply new tools to improve productivity. Its themes include smart manufacturing, the low-altitude economy, cybersecurity, cultural tourism, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) and entertainment, in line with the local government's "1+4" development strategy for appropriate economic diversification.



Macau Hotel Association Vice Chairman Rutger Verschuren addresses yesterday's "Startup Fest Macao 2026" business lunch at Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau's Chinnery Ballroom in Nape.

– Photo: Khalel Vallo

The event also introduced SMART PASS, an intelligent platform combining electronic business cards and business matching, allowing participants to connect by scanning codes at the venue.

In his keynote address, Verschuren highlighted how established businesses could work with startups to introduce sustainable and technology-driven solutions. Drawing on the experience of Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau, which opened – under a different name – in 1984*, he said the hotel had remained in operation for more than four decades because it continued to adapt. "If we had not changed and kept up with the times, this building would just be rubble by now," Verschuren said.

Verschuren described the hotel as a living laboratory for sustainability and smart hospitality, inviting local startups to develop and test solutions in areas including energy and building management, food waste, guestroom technology and reducing single-use items. He noted that last year, Artyzen became the first hotel in Macau to receive LEED Gold certification for Operations and Maintenance from the US Green Building Council. It also received several environmental recognitions this year, including the Macao Green Hotel Silver Award.

The hotel is also exploring solar energy applications and AI-based room controls, while working towards an international smart-building certification covering connectivity, building systems, guest experience and cybersecurity. Verschuren said that hotels could provide a practical testing environment because solutions could be assessed through real guests, kitchens and building systems. He added that technology could help address staffing challenges in Macau's hospitality sector, particularly by automating repetitive tasks such as data entry and routine enquiries. However, he stressed that technology should support employees rather than replace them.

"A guest remembers the person who welcomed them, not the system behind it," Verschuren said.

Verschuren also cautioned startups against greenwashing, saying businesses should be able to provide evidence to substantiate claims about sustainable products and supply chains. He highlighted the importance of traceability, while noting that digital records were only reliable when the information entered into them was accurate. "Honest numbers beat big claims," he said.

Following the opening ceremony, a summit forum titled "AI Reshaping the Future: New Opportunities and Challenges for Youth Entrepreneurship in Macao" brought together representatives from Alibaba Cloud, Kingdee, Shenzhen Xizhiyue and BrainCo, the statement noted. ■

**Over the decades, the hotel has operated under several different names:*

The Excelsior (1984): It originally opened under the Excelsior brand, which was part of Mandarin International Hotels (the precursor to Mandarin Oriental).

Oriental Hotel / Mandarin Oriental, Macau: Shortly after opening, it was renamed the Oriental Hotel, and following the group's corporate rebranding, it became the well-known Mandarin Oriental, Macau—a name it held for over two decades.

Grand Lapa, Macau (2009): In August 2009, ahead of the opening of the new Mandarin Oriental property at One Central (which opened in 2010), the original Avenida da Amizade hotel was rebranded as Grand Lapa, Macau (drawing inspiration from Lisbon's Lapa district), though it continued to be managed by the Mandarin Oriental Hotel Group until early 2014, when management transitioned to Artyzen Hospitality Group (a subsidiary of Shun Tak Holdings).

Artyzen Grand Lapa Macau (2021): On January 1, 2021, the property underwent a further rebrand to incorporate the Artyzen flagship name. – Gemini



'START & FINISH'
highlights racing action at Cunha gallery

Rui Pastorin

Photos of racing action by veteran photographer António Duarte Mil-Homens continue to be on display at the Rui Cunha Foundation (FRC) for the exhibition "START & FINISH" until November 21.

The exhibition features photos taken by the award-winning photographer over the past four years, capturing the high speeds of both racecars and motorcycles in still frames as they traverse Macau's legendary Guia Circuit during previous editions of the Macau Grand Prix (MGP), which will kick off four days of racing action across seven categories next Thursday.

The photos are displayed across the gallery's walls, greeting visitors as soon as they enter the ground-floor gallery located at 749 Avenida da Praia Grande, Luen Pong Building.

A compilation of photos is also presented in a video projection at the venue, along with memorabilia such as photography vests and passes used in previous editions. Flags top it all off, altogether conveying the atmosphere and excitement that come with Macau's annual motorsport event.

Lisbon-born Mil-Homens has been photographing the motorsport event since 1999, with the exhibition serving as a follow-up to an exhibition he held at the gallery back in 2017.

In a statement by the gallery earlier this week, Mil-Homens was quoted as saying that during each year of coverage, he has tried to capture the action on the track, with the exhibition showcasing some of the resulting images. "I hope everyone can feel the speed, the concentration of the drivers and the will to win in them," the 77-year-old lensman, who has been taking photos for 52 years and has a rich portfolio covering everything from photojournalism to scientific photography.

"Each photograph carries the thrill of acceleration, the hopes held at the starting line and the emotions of crossing the finish line. These moments can never be repeated. My role is to preserve them as part of Macau's collective memory," the statement quoted Mil-Homens as saying.

Mil-Homens has showcased his works across 28 solo exhibitions, while he has presented them during 37 group photography and art shows, the statement said. His photos have also been published in dozens of books, the statement added.

Besides photography, of which he has taught 52 courses and held numerous workshops, Mil-Homens also engages in painting and writing, mainly poetry.

For more insights into the exhibition, MGP coverage, and photography overall, one can read a Post interview at https://www.macaupostdaily.com/news/29950.



Veteran photographer António Duarte Mil-Homens addresses the opening ceremony of his photo exhibition at the Rui Cunha Foundation gallery on Tuesday.

Photos taken at the exhibition venue on Tuesday by Rui Pastorin

















San Miu reopens revamped Flower City flagship with over 8,000 products



A San Miu staff member (left) introduces the Asian Flavour hot food and ready-and-eat section to the media during yesterday's guided tour of the revamped supermarket in Taipa's Flower City.



San Miu General Manager Store Operations Peter Lee (centre) talks to reporters during yesterday's guided media tour of his company's revamped supermarket in Taipa's Flower City.

– Photos: Sherwin Hng

Sherwin Hng

San Miu Supermarket yesterday reopened its renovated flagship shop in Taipa's Flower City, offering more than 8,000 products from around the world following a comprehensive revamp of its retail space and brand image, according to a statement yesterday by the Hong Kong-based DFI Retail Group Holdings Limited Company.

The store, covering more than1,200m², now features upgraded sections for fresh produce and organic vegetables, made-to-order hot food, souvenirs and snacks, and global fine wines. It also offers dedicated sections for high-protein products, healthy dairy products and organic health foods.

The renovation includes a fresh-cut fruit corner and a hot food section serving freshly steamed dim sum and local delicacies. The supermarket has also introduced a new corporate identity and staff uniforms as part of its flagship store refresh initiative. The Flower City branch operates 24/7.

Peter Lee, general manager of store operations at San Miu Supermarket, said during a media event at the supermarket yesterday that the company regularly reviews market developments and changes in consumer habits to identify new business opportunities. He said San Miu focuses on serving local communities and meeting residents' everyday needs, rather than competing with retailers in neighbouring cities, aiming to improve its services and shopping experience in response to changing consumer expectations.

Talking to the media, Lee noted that the upgrade of the Flower City store was not simply a response to outbound spending or market competition, but the result of continuously observing changes in Macau residents' consumption habits and looking inward to improve its own operations. Given Taipa's diverse customer base, many residents previously had to travel across districts or shop online for imported goods. Leveraging the group's global supply chain advantages, San Miu has brought quality global products directly into neighbourhood stores, while welcoming customer feedback on desired items so the team can strive to source them.

At the same time, in response to Macau's fast-paced lifestyle and growing demand for ready-to-eat meals, the supermarket has expanded its fresh-cut fruit, hot food, frozen seafood and meat sections to cater to daily meal needs across breakfast, lunch and dinner, Lee said.

Lee added that residents had become increasingly concerned about product quality in recent years, prompting the supermarket to expand its range of imported goods. Its fruit products are sourced from more than 15 countries and regions. Of its 110 fruit varieties, products imported from overseas account for nearly half of the selection but contribute about 70 per cent of sales.

The supermarket introduced organic vegetables early this year, which now account for about 15 per cent of vegetable sales. Its expanded food selection also includes limited-time seasonal products such as hairy crabs, while the new sections cater to growing demand for healthier products and a wider range of shopping choices.

He also noted that the brand's staff structure remained stable, with many long-serving store employees having worked there for 18 years, adding that its "customer-first" service ethos remained unchanged.

Discussing future plans for its Macau branches, Lee said the Flower City store serves as a pilot for the upgrade. While the company has completed evaluations of all its 20 stores across Macau, it will not carry out a large-scale overhaul all at once. Instead, the team will monitor the Flower City branch's operational data and gather customer feedback to identify proven upgrade elements before replicating them according to local conditions. Each store will maintain an overall modern and vibrant direction, while adjusting its product mix based on the surrounding commercial area's household demographics and customer preferences – such as increasing ready-to-eat offerings at some branches and expanding imported goods at others, Lee said.

To celebrate its reopening, the supermarket is offering promotions for four days, including this Sunday. Customers spending at least 168 patacas in a single transaction can receive a 15-pataca discount, while those spending 288 patacas or more can get a 35-pataca discount. The first 500 customers each day will also receive a selected gift and a 10-pataca cash voucher, while stocks last. ■

澳門特別行政區政府
Governo da Região Administrativa Especial de Macau
文化體育局
Direcção dos Serviços de Cultura e Desporto

Barrier installation schedule for the 73rd Macau Grand Prix

"The 73rd Macau Grand Prix" will be held from 19th to 22nd of November. Due to the event barriers will be installed and traffic will be suspended in the locations of the streets below starting from 16th November. These barriers will be progressively removed upon the conclusion of the racing on the 22nd November and until the morning of the 23rd November. The Macau Grand Prix Organizing Committee asks for the understanding of motorists and residents and appeals for the respect of temporary traffic signage and instructions of Traffic Authorities.

Date	Barrier Installation Time	Road	Location
16th November (Monday)	**15:00**	Av. da Amizade	Exit of World Trade center
			Exit of Amizade building
		Est. de Cacilhas	*Depósito de Pólvora* (Ramp)
		Est. D. Maria II	Entrance and Exit of the garage at Communications Museum
		Rua dos Pescadores	Entrance and Exit of Macao Water
17th November (Tuesday)	**10:00**	Av. da Amizade	Entrance and Exit of the garage at Jubilee Court Building (Next to petrol station)
		Est. de Cacilhas	Entrance and Exit of the garage at Cheng Pak Kok Building
	15:00	Est. dos Parses	Exit of the garage at the Monetary Authority of Macao
		Av. da Amizade	Junction of the crossing point from *Rua de Nagasaki* to *Av. da Amizade* (Next to Jardim San On Building)
		Est. D. Maria II	Entrance and Exit of Car Workshop (Next to Communications Museum)
18th November (Wednesday)	**10:00**	Av. da Amizade	Junction of the crossing point from Amizade Bridge to *Av. da Amizade*

Govt proposes mechanism to dissolve dormant associations

Tony Wong

The government announced yesterday that it had finished drafting a bill governing the setting-up and operations of the city's associations, aiming to address operational irregularities – such as the large number of dormant associations – while strengthening government oversight and fostering the high-quality development of associations in the city.

One of the bill's major proposals is to establish a formal legal mechanism to dissolve dormant associations.

Secretary for Administration and Justice Wong Sio Chak and Identification Services Bureau (DSI) Director Sonia Chan Hoi Fan made the announcement during a press conference at Government Headquarters yesterday. Wong is also the spokesman for the government's top advisory body – the Executive Council.

The bill will be submitted to the Legislative Assembly (AL) in due course for debate, review, and a vote.

The bill proposes to designate the Identification Services Bureau (DSI) as the sole public entity formally tasked with supervising the city's associations. The bill also proposes to streamline administrative procedures for the registration of new associations.



Secretary for Administration and Justice Wong Sio Chak (right) and Identification Services Bureau (DSI) Director Sonia Chan Hoi Fan address yesterday's Executive Council press conference at Government Headquarters. – Photo: Tony Wong

Moreover, the government proposes having the power to dissolve any association if its objectives or operations are found to endanger national security.

The establishment and operation of associations are currently regulated by a law (Law 2/99/M) enacted in 1999 – shortly before Macau's return to the motherland – as well as certain provisions listed in the Macau Civil Code.

The government proposes to establish a new, unified law to replace Law 2/99/M.

During yesterday's press conference, Wong noted that Law 2/99/M and the respective provisions governing associations listed in the Civil Code had been in force for many years. He said that the provisions had proven to be overly general, undemanding, and scattered, while the establishment and operation of associations had been subject to management by different public entities, making it impossible to ensure effective oversight.

Wong said that all these factors had led to a continuous increase in the number of associations in the city over time, as well as highly irregular operations, hindering the development of associations towards higher standards of quality and professionalism.

Currently, registering a new association involves three separate entities – the Identification Services Bureau, the Notary Office, and the Legal Affairs Bureau (DSAJ). The registration process is inconvenient for the public and incurs substantial administrative costs, the government has previously pointed out.

The bill, Wong said yesterday, proposes a single, specific public entity formally tasked with handling the registration of new associations and supervising their operations – the Identification Services Bureau.

The government noted earlier this year that there were fewer than 2,000 associations shortly before the establishment of the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) on December 20, 1999, whereas the number has grown to about 12,400 nowadays.

However, only about 60 percent of these 12,400 community, sport, educational, business, welfare, mutual aid, professional, neighbourhood, cultural, artistic, and other kinds of associations remain active. The remainder have either ceased operations or never began operating after their establishment, the government has pointed out.

DSI Director Sonia Chan Hoi Fan noted during yesterday's press conference that the government currently does not have a formal mechanism to dissolve associations. The bill, she said, proposes to establish a formal mechanism granting her bureau the power to dissolve associations.

According to the bill, she said, the bureau can decide to dissolve an association in three major circumstances.

First, the bureau can decide to dissolve an association after the MSAR's Committee for Safeguarding National Security has concluded that its objective or operations will endanger national security.

The second situation concerns branches in Macau set up by associations outside Macau.

If the parent association outside Macau is dissolved, the bureau can correspondingly decide to dissolve the branch in Macau.

The third situation concerns the bureau's power to request an association to remedy irregularities existing in its operations, with the aim of addressing the issue of dormant associations.

If such an association fails to remedy the irregularities before a specific deadline, the bureau can decide to dissolve it. ■

Sam vows to uphold Dr Sun Yat-sen's spirit in governance

Continued from p.1

Sam noted that Macau shares a deep and special historical connection with Dr Sun. Macau was an important starting point for his journey to the wider world, the first stop where he practised medicine to save lives and help the public, and the cradle where he orchestrated the republican cause, Sam noted.

According to historians, Dr Sun practised medicine in Macau for about one year, from autumn 1892 until late 1893. Facing regulatory barriers in Macau, he relocated his medical practice to Guangzhou in late 1893. During that period, Dr Sun partnered with his Macanese friend Francisco Hermenegildo Fernandes to launch the bilingual newspaper *Echo Macaense* (鏡海叢報) in July 1893, using its Chinese-language pages to publish his earliest reformist and anti-Qing writings.

Macau was, moreover, a safe haven where he sought refuge in times of danger and a spiritual home where he cherished his family ties, Sam said.

Dr Sun's revolutionary career is inextricably linked with Macau while his presence adds to the richness of the city's historical memory, Sam said.

Sam underlined that the best way to commemorate Dr Sun is to carry forward his precious legacy and strive for the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In his speech, Sam called for Macau's civil society to carry forward the patriotic thoughts, revolutionary resolve, and enterprising spirit of Dr Sun and other revolutionary pioneers, thereby promoting the spirit of patriotism, ensuring the implementation of the "patriots governing Macao" principle, and building a more prosperous and stable Macau.

Sam underlined the local government's commitment to leveraging Macau's unique advantage as a bridge linking the Chinese mainland with the world and its role as a window for mutual learning among civilisations, with the aim of telling good stories about China and Macau to the world and forging the greatest possible consensus at home and abroad in support of the cause of "peaceful reunification and 'One Country, Two Systems'", thereby making new and greater contributions to building a strong country and achieving the great cause of national rejuvenation on all fronts through Chinese modernisation.

In addition to Sam, yesterday's opening ceremony was also attended by other dignitaries including Central People's Government Liaison Office in the MSAR Director Zheng Xincong, Foreign Ministry Commissioner Bian Lixin, Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) Macau Garrison Commander Chen Wensheng, Legislative Assembly (AL) President André Cheong Weng Chon, Court of Final Appeal (TUI) President Song Man Lei, and Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Wallis O Lam.

After the ceremony, the dignitaries visited the exhibition and listened to a briefing about it.

Located at the Dot Art Space in the Macao Cultural Centre, the free-admission exhibition is open to the public between 10:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. daily until November 27. ■

More on Dr Sun on pages 7& 9

Off-duty PJ officer probed for drink-driving: police

Sherwin Hng

An off-duty Judiciary Police (PJ) officer is suspected of drink-driving after his car crashed into more than 20 parked motorcycles on Avenida Marginal do Lam Mau (林茂海邊大馬路) early yesterday morning, according to Public Security Police Force (PSP) spokesperson.

The driver, aged around 30 and working as a criminal investigator for the bureau, lost control of his car while driving under the influence of alcohol (DUI) at about 1:00 a.m. The crash damaged more than 20 motorcycles parked in a designated parking area near Van Sion Son Chun (運順新邨) residential estate, leaving the driver with minor injuries.

According to the spokesperson, a breathalyser test showed that his blood alcohol concentration was 0.95 grams per litre. He is being investigated for drink-driving, which is classified as a minor offence under the Road Traffic Law.

Meanwhile, the Judiciary Police said in a follow-up statement that it had launched a disciplinary case against the officer and would fully cooperate with the investigation into the traffic accident.

The Judiciary Police also attach great importance to the discipline of its personnel, noting that obeying the law is a fundamental professional requirement for law enforcement officers. It has also instructed all units to strengthen staff awareness of legal compliance and prevent similar incidents. ■



This blurred photo circulating online shows a car that crashed into more than 20 parked motorcycles on Avenida Marginal do Lam Mau early yesterday morning.

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CLOUDY APART FROM SUNNY INTERVALS.
SHOWERS LATER.
FORCE 3 TO 4 EAST TO SOUTHEASTERLY WINDS, OCCASIONALLY FORCE 5 WITH GUSTS.
RELATIVE HUMIDITY WILL RANGE BETWEEN 65% AND 98%.

22ºC~27ºC

Source: SMG

Xi calls for carrying forward Sun Yat-sen's legacy in national rejuvenation drive

BEIJING – President Xi Jinping yesterday called for carrying forward the legacy of Sun Yat-sen, one of the nation's revered revolutionary forefathers, to make joint efforts for national rejuvenation and turn into reality the great dream of all Chinese people since the advent of modern times.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, made the remarks at a gathering held in Beijing to commemorate the 160th anniversary of Sun's birth.

Born in 1866, Sun led the Revolution of 1911 more than a century ago to abolish the absolute monarchy that had ruled China for thousands of years. Sun died in 1925.

Yesterday's gathering in the Great Hall of the People was attended by about 3,000 people, including senior Chinese leaders Li Qiang, Zhao Leji, Wang Huning, Cai Qi, Ding Xuexiang and Li Xi, who are members of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee. Wang presided over the event.

Xi met with Sun's relatives and representatives of overseas guests before the event started.

In his speech, Xi hailed Sun as a great national hero, a great patriot and a great pioneer of China's democratic revolution.

He said that Chinese communists are the most steadfast supporters, loyal collaborators, and faithful successors to the revolutionary cause initiated by Sun.

For more than 100 years, the CPC has led the Chinese people in writing the most magnificent chapter in the history of the Chinese nation, Xi said.

"The best way for us to remember Dr. Sun is to emulate, inherit and carry forward his invaluable spirit, steadily advancing our endeavors to build a great country and rejuvenate our nation," Xi said.

Highlighting Sun's lifelong devotion to the country, Xi called on all Chinese people to learn from Sun and promote patriotism to strive for a strong and prosperous China.

He also lauded Sun's dedication to the people, underscoring the imperative of always putting the people first and serving them wholeheartedly.

On the new journey, it is essential to make solid headway in promoting well-rounded personal development and common prosperity for all, Xi stressed.

Noting that Sun devoted his life to the pursuit of truth, Xi stressed the need to learn from Sun's example, advance theoretical exploration and innovation with courage, and continue to write new chapters in adapting Marxism to the Chinese context and the needs of the times.



President Xi Jinping, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), addresses a gathering to commemorate the 160th anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's birth at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday. *– Xinhua*

Xi called on the Chinese people to carry forward Sun's unyielding determination, rise to challenges ahead and break new ground in the country's development.

"We must carry forward the fighting spirit, build up our ability, be ready to withstand high winds, choppy waters, and even dangerous storms, and overcome all the risks and challenges we face on the way forward," Xi said.

Calling on people to learn from Sun's commitment to unity, Xi also emphasized adhering to the united front and strengthening the great unity among all the sons and daughters of the Chinese nation.

Highlighting Sun's global vision, Xi called for vigorously promoting the common values of humanity and actively advancing the building of a community with a shared future for humanity.

"Dr. Sun always upheld national unity and ethnic solidarity, and resolutely opposed any word or act attempting to split the country and divide the nation," Xi said.

Resolving the Taiwan question and realizing the complete reunification of the motherland is an unwavering historical mission for the CPC, the shared aspiration of all Chinese people, and a natural requirement for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, Xi stressed.

People on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and all Chinese at home and abroad should join hands to oppose the "Taiwan independence" secessionist forces, and work together for the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and the complete reunification of the motherland, Xi said.

"On the basis of adhering to the one-China principle and the 1992 Consensus, we are willing to engage in dialogue and consultations with people of vision and insight from all sectors in Taiwan on matters related to cross-Strait relations and national reunification," Xi said.

"We will definitely give full consideration to Taiwan's realities and take full account of the interests and feelings of our compatriots in Taiwan," Xi said. "But we will never leave any room for 'Taiwan independence' separatist activities in any form."

"The historical trends are unstoppable. The complete reunification of our motherland must be realized, and it can, without doubt, be realized," Xi said.

– Xinhua

Taiwan people mark 160th anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's birth

TAIPEI – People from various sectors in Taiwan held a series of commemorative events yesterday, marking the 160th anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's birth and honoring his revolutionary legacy.

At the Sun Yat-sen Memorial Hall in Taipei, a steady stream of visitors gathered throughout the morning to pay their respects. More than 100 representatives of the Chinese Kuomintang (KMT), the New Party and the Taipei Kwong Tung Community Association and other groups took turns paying tribute before a statue of Sun.

Born in 1866, Sun led the Revolution of 1911 more than a century ago to abolish the absolute monarchy that had ruled China for thousands of years. He was also a founding figure of the KMT. Sun died in 1925 and is widely revered by Chinese people as one of the nation's revolutionary forefathers.

"Sun devoted his life to national reunification and rejuvenation. People on both sides of the Taiwan Strait should remember him and carry forward his spirit," said a Taipei resident surnamed Li, who has attended the annual commemorative event for years.

A woman surnamed Wu from New Taipei City, who attended with a friend, said she considered the visit meaningful. Having learned about Sun through books and documentaries, Wu said she admired his ideals and convictions, adding that his thinking remained relevant today and worthy of further study.

At a conference on the cross-Strait peace initiative held yesterday, Kao Yuang-kuang, former dean of the College of Social Sciences at Chengchi University, highlighted Sun's historical connections with Taiwan.

Sun visited Taiwan three times and helped establish a branch of the revolutionary organization Tongmenghui in Taiwan, introducing democratic and revolutionary ideas to the island. He also inspired many young patriots in Taiwan to travel to the mainland to join the revolution, Kao said.

Yesterday afternoon, a lecture commemorating Sun was held. Lin Kuang-hui, founding chairman of an association for the descendants of anti-Japanese patriots in Taiwan, recounted the life of his grandfather, Lin Tsu-mi, who was a patriot in Japanese-colonized Taiwan and joined Sun's revolutionary campaigns on the mainland.

The lecture sought to help younger generations in Taiwan better understand this period of history and ensure it is not forgotten, Lin said.

Lan Bo-chow, a renowned writer, said resistance movements launched by people in Taiwan during the Japanese colonial rule (1895-1945) had been inspired by the 1911 Revolution and could be seen as its manifestation on the island.

These movements demonstrated the close historical ties between Taiwan and the mainland, reflecting a shared sense of identity and solidarity, Lan said.– *Xinhua*

Ceremony held at Beijing temple to pay tribute to Sun Yat-sen



A ceremony commemorating the 160th anniversary of the birth of Sun Yat-sen is held, with tributes paid at his cenotaph, at Biyun Temple in Beijing, yesterday. *– Xinhua*

BEIJING – A ceremony was held yesterday morning at Beijing's Biyun Temple to commemorate the 160th anniversary of the birth of Sun Yat-sen, one of China's revered revolutionary forefathers, with tributes paid at his cenotaph.

During the ceremony's first round, representatives from the General Office of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the United Front Work Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee, the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang, the Beijing municipal government, as well as Sun's relatives, overseas Chinese and international friends, stood in silence for three minutes, presented floral baskets and bowed three times before a statue of Sun.

It was presided over by Zheng Jianbang, vice chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and chairman of the Central Committee of the Revolutionary Committee of the Chinese Kuomintang.

In the second round, representatives of people from Taiwan paid their tribute in the same fashion.

Born in 1866, Sun led the Revolution of 1911 more than a century ago to abolish the absolute monarchy that had ruled China for thousands of years.

On March 12, 1925, he died in Beijing and his remains were kept in Biyun Temple at Fragrant Hills in the western suburbs of Beijing before being transferred to the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum in Nanjing in 1929. *– Xinhua*

China points to problems with Belgium-Chile joint candidature to host UN marine biodiversity secretariat

BEIJING – China yesterday called on the international community to find a home for the Secretariat of the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) best positioned for its efficient operation, pointing out problems with the joint candidature by Belgium and Chile.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Mao Ning made the remarks at a regular press briefing after Belgium and Chile on November 6 announced the decision to join their candidatures for the seat of the secretariat. This joint candidature provides for the secretariat being based in the city of Valparaíso, Chile, while the Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) will be installed in and operating from Brussels, and Brussels will host the meetings of the subsidiary bodies.

Mao said that earlier this year, China nominated Xiamen to bid for the seat of the Secretariat of the BBNJ Agreement, noting that the candidature has quickly received the support of the majority of the Parties to the Agreement.

"By seeking an unauthorized backroom deal on issues that should be determined by the Conference of the Parties (COP), the joint candidature is problematic in at least six aspects," the spokesperson said.

6 problematic aspects

First, it contravenes the stipulations of the BBNJ Agreement. According to the agreement, the seat of the secretariat, the specific modalities for the operation of the CHM, including its installation, as well as where the subsidiary bodies hold their meetings shall all be determined by COP, and the CHM shall be managed by the secretariat, she said.

"Belgium and Chile traded under the table what should be collectively determined by all Parties to the Agreement. This is a violation of the stipulations of the agreement and an act of disrespect to the authority of COP," Mao said.

Second, it contravenes procedural justice, Mao said, adding that the choice of the secretariat seat and the development of the CHM are two items of different nature scheduled to be collectively determined by COP through separate decisions.

The Belgium-Chile proposal bundles the two together in an attempt to force it as a package upon other Parties, which is against applicable procedural rules and a hijack of the Parties' will, she said.

Third, it contravenes established international practice. Stressing that the management of the CHM is a key mandate of the secretariat, Mao said in the practice established by other international treaties like the Convention on Biological Diversity, the secretariats and CHMs are located in the same place.

"The Belgium-Chile proposal, which locates the Secretariat and the CHM separately across the ocean, will without a doubt raise the operation cost, lower management efficiency, and increase the financial burden on the Parties to the Agreement," Mao said.

Fourth, it contravenes equitable geographical distribution. The vast majority of major global institutions are based in Europe, with none located in Asia. Developing countries have been calling on global institutions to redress this long-existing injustice and bring about greater fairness and equity, the spokesperson said.

She said Brussels is already home to the headquarters of NATO and the EU. "If this non-coastal city were to host the CHM of an ocean-related treaty as well, it would further widen the digital divide to the detriment of the shared interests of the Global South."

Fifth, it contravenes fair competition. Noting the BBNJ Secretariat is tasked with contributing to global ocean governance, and the selection of its seat should be a fair and friendly process in keeping with the rules, Mao said the Belgium-Chile proposal, however, politicizes the bidding process and attempts to divide Parties into camps.

"It not only undermines the principle of fair, friendly and healthy competition, but also negates the essence of multilateralism," she said.

Sixth, it contravenes the original commitment. Chile first made the bid citing its significance for the Global South. Yet according to the new proposal, Chile will no longer assume the substantive functions of the secretariat. Belgium, for its part, only seeks to host the CHM and thereby has in effect relinquished its bid for the secretariat seat, Mao said.

Stressing that the adoption and entry into force of the BBNJ Agreement is a victory of multilateralism, Mao said its implementation likewise needs to serve and advance the common well-being of all humanity.

"We call on the international community to find a home for the secretariat best positioned for its efficient operation and the effective implementation of the agreement," Mao said, adding that China firmly supports multilateralism and the cause of the UN, and is committed to promoting and improving global ocean governance.

She said that as one of the first signatories and Parties to the Agreement and the largest assessed-contributor to its budget, China has the will, capability and confidence to provide strong support and backing for the operation of the secretariat.

"China is full ready. We look forward to working with all Parties to the Agreement to keep the selection of the secretariat seat proceeding in the right direction, and uphold the overall and fundamental interests of the international community, especially those of developing countries," Mao said. *– Xinhua*



A staff member promotes umbrellas via live-streaming at the workshop of Youyifeinuo, an umbrella manufacturing enterprise, in Shangyu District of Shaoxing City, Zhejiang Province, on Wednesday. In the first three quarters of this year, umbrella exports from Shangyu District, Shaoxing City, exceeded 1.5 billion yuan (US$225 million). Shangyu is now home to nearly three times as many cross-border e-commerce enterprises as in 2025. In recent years, the local umbrella industry has continuously improved its product competitiveness, and a distinctive industrial cluster has taken shape, bringing together more than 1,400 enterprises and employing 45,000 people. – Xinhua

China's AI short-drama boom: cheaper production, bigger audiences, harder challenges

Analysis

BEIJING – A five-member modern military unit lands in China's Northern Song Dynasty, armed with rifles, a medical kit and dwindling ammunition and fuel. This is the hook of Armed into the Song Dynasty – one of the breakout AI-generated short dramas.

The series premiered August 22 this year and has grown to 10 seasons and 1,000 episodes. Each runs under two minutes, with cumulative views topping four billion. Millions of viewers pre-ordered future seasons ahead of release.

The hit stands out for its grassroots crew. The six-person team includes a former ride-hailing driver, a delivery worker and an ex-office employee. Lead planner Zhang Hansheng, 54, only began teaching himself AI video generation last March.

HIGHER EFFICIENCY, LOWER COSTS

AI enables this large-scale, fast production. A small team can quickly render sprawling battlefields and costly set pieces, pumping out 100 episodes weekly to meet audience demand. Short runtimes suit fragmented viewing, and viewer feedback helps creators refine later installments.

Armed into the Song Dynasty is no outlier. AI is lowering barriers to short-drama production. Sci-fi title Guixu, launched in May, hit 100 million views on an investment of roughly 200,000 yuan. Its creator worked alone, with no formal film training.

The 12-episode series cost about 2,000 yuan in computing power per minute of runtime, with each episode around eight minutes long. A comparable traditional live-action sci-fi or disaster production could cost up to 100 times more.

Wider industry data shows even bigger efficiency gains. In the first quarter of 2026, premium AI short dramas cost roughly one-tenth as much as equivalent live-action short dramas. A 100-episode AI series can wrap in just three days.

AI also simplifies scripting, storyboarding, dubbing, translation and localization. Hao Cheng, an innovation specialist at Mango TV, said the technology will speed overseas expansion for Chinese short dramas. It adapts local internet references, costumes and settings for foreign viewers while preserving core plots, reducing reliance on separate local adaptation teams.

FAST-GROWING MARKET

China already has a huge audience for AI short dramas, with at least 600 million viewers.

Cao Shumin, head of the National Radio and Television Administration (NRTA), said in early November that around 550,000 micro and short dramas were released nationwide in the first 10 months of the year. That is 17 times the full-year total for 2025. More than 94 percent were AI-made.

The boom has reshaped the market. Analytics firm DataEye reported China's AI short-drama market exceeded 22 billion yuan in the first five months of the year, with a full-year forecast of 40 billion yuan.

Major Chinese tech firms are racing for market share. Tencent rolled out an AI short-drama streaming platform in September, building a full pipeline from production to distribution. ByteDance and Kuaishou launched their AI generation and playback platforms earlier and now serve as major tool providers for creators.

ByteDance's Hongguo app features AI short dramas as core content. It reached 168 million daily active users in July, up 107 percent year on year, and hit 430 million total users by September. Those figures cover all short-drama consumption, not only AI titles, but they illustrate the large distribution funnel feeding AI content.

Video-generation models keep advancing rapidly. Kuaishou's Kling AI, one of China's leading tools, has upgraded from version 1.0 to 3.0 Omni over two years. It surpassed 100 million global users by June and generated more than 650 million yuan in first-quarter revenue in 2026.

No single model dominates the space so far. ByteDance's Seedance, ShengShu Technology's Vidu and MiniMax's Hailuo all support professional production workflows.

CHALLENGES BEHIND BOOM

Rapid growth does not guarantee reliable profits. DataEye uses 50 million views as the widely accepted break-even benchmark. Only 1.3 percent of AI short dramas hit that threshold and turn a profit, while 98.7 percent operate at a loss.

That leaves a tiny handful of breakout hits, while most titles attract little attention. Most production teams struggle to stay solvent and sustain output.

The strain is structural. Thousands of similar shows compete for the same algorithmic slots, splitting audience attention and revenue-share payouts thinner. Even with cheaper AI tools, high-end models, repeated renders, computing power and promotion still carry costs.

Quality remains a bottleneck. Developers are pushing AI from short clips toward long-form series and feature films. A polished two-minute episode, however, does not mean AI can sustain a full-length narrative. Inconsistent facial rendering, shifting backgrounds, unnatural movement and plot gaps easily break viewer immersion.

Sanxingdui: Future Past, billed as China's first AI theatrical feature, grossed only 1.8 million yuan as of Wednesday after its Oct. 23 release. Producer BONA Film Group calls it an experiment, with another AI feature already in production.

Regulators are putting guardrails in place. Rules require explicit consent before using a person's face or voice in AI content, alongside pre-production approval, technical screening, human review and traceable records. In November, the NRTA launched a two-month campaign targeting shoddy, vulgar and formulaic micro and short dramas. *– Xinhua*

Indonesian VP in high school diploma scandal resigns

Mariëtte Le Roux and Dessy Sagita

JAKARTA – Indonesia's vice president resigned yesterday in the midst of a scandal over his high school diploma that has added to pressure on a government facing widespread dissatisfaction over the economy, graft and wildfires.

There had been repeated calls for Gibran Rakabuming Raka, 39, to step down following a Supreme Court ruling last month to annul his high school qualification, obtained abroad.

Yesterday, he submitted his resignation to President Prabowo Subianto and parliament.

Prabowo told reporters he had accepted Gibran's resignation "with a heavy heart" and praised him for acting "for a greater cause, for the interests of the nation, the state, and the people of Indonesia".

Gibran said late yesterday the decision had not been an easy one but was taken in the "greater interest".

"This decision is my personal decision and has nothing to do with diplomas; once again, it has nothing to do with diplomas. All my educational documents exist, are complete, and I have already submitted them to the court," he said in a video statement.

Indonesia's vice president does not have many constitutionally defined powers apart from acting as the president's representative at official events and taking over if his boss is incapacitated.



Indonesian Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka (centre) arrives to submit his resignation letter to the People's Consultative Assembly at the parliament building in Jakarta yesterday. – AFP

'Political realignment'

Gibran's downfall came after thousands of Indonesians took to the streets in recent weeks to protest economic hardship, graft, perceived authoritarianism and the government's handling of months of devastating wildfires emitting toxic haze.

His exit is likely to complicate a loose governing alliance that includes the parties of Prabowo and of his predecessor Joko Widodo – Gibran's father, who goes by Jokowi.

The resignation "marks a significant political realignment, but does not necessarily threaten government stability", according to Khairul Fahmi, executive director of the Institute for Security and Strategic Studies (ISESS) think tank.

"Jokowi will retain political influence, but Gibran's departure could reduce his network's direct access to power. For Prabowo, this creates greater room to consolidate his leadership and pursue his own political agenda," Khairul told AFP.

Two years into his term, Prabowo's popularity has reached record lows.

Last week, Indonesian authorities arrested the former national police chief and three senior police officials for allegedly tapping the president's telephone.

Yesterday, police said they were investigating possible treason.

Prabowo's rise to power was widely credited to support from the popular Jokowi, who served two terms from 2014 to 2024.

The choice of Gibran as running mate strengthened ties between Prabowo's Gerindra party and figures aligned to Jokowi, until then a political rival who had defeated Prabowo twice in presidential elections.

Under the alliance, Gibran and other Jokowi allies were appointed to key positions in the government of Prabowo, who is seen as close to the military while the police have traditionally been loyal to Jokowi.

Youngest-ever VP

Gibran became the youngest person ever to hold Indonesia's vice presidency.

Then, two years into his term, detractors went to court to challenge his high school certificate – a prerequisite for the job.

Gibran had completed his schooling in Singapore before going on to study for a marketing degree there.

When submitting his candidacy to the General Elections Commission (KPU) in 2024, he filed a certificate stating his overseas education was equivalent to a vocational high school in Indonesia.

Last month, however, Indonesia's Supreme Court ruled to invalidate the document, prompting moves in parliament to unseat him.

Gibran has consistently defended his credentials.

Prabowo now has 14 days to submit two names from which parliament will have two months to pick Gibran's replacement.

Researcher Arya Fernandes of Indonesia's Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) told AFP Prabowo will likely seek "a candidate who is acceptable to all coalition members to avoid triggering divisions within the coalition" that includes Jokowi's party.

"The vice-presidential candidate nominated by Prabowo could potentially become his running mate in 2029, or emerge as a political competitor. He will therefore carefully weigh the pros and cons of each potential nominee," he said. *– AFP*

Kim inspects naval base under construction

SEOUL – North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspected a naval base under construction, state media reported yesterday, calling it a "core undertaking" for maritime security.

The visit follows his pledge last week to possess "the most advanced and powerful warships", as the nuclear-armed state speeds up its ambitious naval expansion.

North Korea has been upgrading its navy in recent years, commissioning 5,000-tonne destroyers and testing ship-launched missiles.

Kim has pledged to arm the fleet with nuclear weapons and build larger 10,000-tonne warships.

He "gave field guidance at the construction of major naval base on the east coast, which is being accelerated", official Korean Central News Agency reported in an English-language dispatch.

"The construction of the modern naval base is a crucial core undertaking directly related to the security of our state and the defence of its maritime sovereignty from A to Z," he was quoted as saying.

"It should be completed without fail at the qualitative level", he added.

KCNA photos showed Kim walking around the seaside construction site, accompanied by naval officials. Another image showed him speaking to officials gathered around him.

Details of the new naval base including its exact location and scale were not reported.

On Monday, the North test-fired a new high-speed torpedo system, which is expected to enter naval service in early 2027.

The nuclear-armed state last year unveiled a 5,000-tonne destroyer-class vessel that experts believe can carry both ship-to-surface and ship-to-air missiles. *– AFP*



Protesters wearing US President Donald Trump's look-alike wigs march to Trump Tower during an anti-Trump rally in Manila yesterday, ahead of Association of South Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit. – AFP

Myanmar, Thailand to promote bilateral friendship, cooperation

YANGON – Myanmar and Thailand discussed ways to strengthen bilateral friendship and cooperation during a meeting between Myanmar President Min Aung Hlaing and a visiting Thai delegation in Nay Pyi Taw yesterday, according to Myanmar's Presidential Press and Information Bureau (PPIB).

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on strengthening friendship and cooperation between the two countries, as well as prospects for constructive cooperation among member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the PPIB said.

They also discussed efforts to combat online scams and gambling, enhance border security, promote trade, conserve the environment and expand cooperation in the energy sector. *– Xinhua*

2 suspects killed in Manila shootout

MANILA – Two unidentified suspects were killed in a shootout in Metro Manila, the capital region of the Philippines, yesterday after they allegedly attempted to rob a police officer, according to local media reports.

According to DZRH News, the incident occurred in Taguig, a major city in Metro Manila. The Taguig City Police said in an initial report that the confrontation took place at about 12:55 p.m. local time when the suspects attempted a holdup, and it escalated into an exchange of gunfire that left both suspects dead.

A responding police officer was wounded in the left shoulder and received medical attention. The police did not immediately release further details, according to the report. *– Xinhua*

Photo exhibition marking 160th birth anniversary of Sun Yat-sen held in Manila

MANILA – A photo exhibition marking the 160th anniversary of Sun Yat-sen's birth was held in Manila, on Wednesday, drawing representatives from China and the Philippines, along with more than 1,000 teachers and students from local Chinese schools.

Hosted by the Filipino-Chinese Amity Club, the event aimed to highlight the historical ties between Sun Yat-sen and the Philippine independence movement, as well as the mutual support between Chinese and Philippine revolutionary pioneers in pursuing national independence.

The event also featured history lectures and film screenings. Representatives from the Chinese Embassy in the Philippines and local Chinese community organizations and schools viewed historical photos and documents on display. *– Xinhua*

2 Indian police officers killed in Kashmir shooting

SRINAGAR, India – The bullet-riddled bodies of two policemen were found yesterday in Indian-administered Kashmir, officials said, a day after suspected rebels wounded three paramilitary troops in a separate attack.

The back-to-back shootings have raised fresh security concerns, days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed a year without casualties among paramilitary forces in the disputed Himalayan region.

The two officers were found dead in Kishtwar, about 220 kilometres southeast of Srinagar, a day after they were reported missing in the same area. Locals reported hearing gunshots early yesterday.

Opposition Congress party president Mallikarjun Kharge said he was "deeply anguished by the tragic loss" of the two policemen.

Local legislator Shagun Parihar blamed "terrorists", referring to rebels opposed to Indian rule, and said that the attack would be "avenged as soon as possible".

A police officer, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to discuss the matter with journalists, confirmed the men had been shot.

Their bodies "were found with bullet injuries", he told AFP.

The officer said the "incident is being investigated", declining to assign blame.

Police have not given any details about the shooting.

In a separate incident on Wednesday, gunmen riding motorbikes opened fire on members of the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) at a security checkpoint in Kulgam district, wounding three before fleeing, according to police.

The attacks came days after Modi celebrated zero "CRPF casualties" in a year "for the first time in 47 years".

"A ZERO that speaks volumes," Modi posted on X.

Muslim-majority Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan since their independence from British rule in 1947 with both claiming the region in full.

Rebel groups have waged a decades-long insurgency seeking independence or merger of the territory with Pakistan.

India regularly blames Pakistan for arming and training rebels for launching attacks on Indian forces in Kashmir, allegations Islamabad denies. *– AFP*

10 police, 18 militants killed in Pakistan's northwest

Lehaz Ali

PESHAWAR, Pakistan – Gunmen attacked police during an operation against illegal gold mining in northwestern Pakistan on Wednesday, killing 10 officers, while 18 militants died in the ensuing fighting, an official police statement said.

A statement by provincial police in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa said officers were returning from a mine in the Gumbat area of Kohat district when militants opened fire on them.

In addition to the 10 police and 18 militant deaths, 12 police personnel were wounded, the statement said.

In the aftermath of the clashes, the Pakistani Taliban, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), claimed responsibility for a series of attacks across the country, including one on a police convoy in the Gumbat area.

Earlier, a senior administrative official in Kohat told AFP that militants set two police vehicles on fire during the assault, while two other police vehicles and one private vehicle were missing.

Another senior administrative official in the Orakzai area of Kohat said that 10 militants belonging to the TTP were killed during a separate operation in the district.

A large quantity of weapons was also recovered from the militants, the official added.

Security forces are battling an intensifying militancy in the border province they say emanates from Afghanistan, an accusation its Taliban government denies.

A spokesman for a local emergency service earlier on Wednesday said there had been a "firing incident involving police personnel" in Kohat district, adding that rescue workers were treating a dozen wounded officers.

'Open war'

Relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have been fraught since the Taliban authorities took power in 2021, and worsened after deadly border clashes in October last year that led to near-total closure of the border.

Clashes subsided after mediation, but the conflict intensified again in February, with Pakistan declaring "an open war" on its neighbour.

In a statement, Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari condemned the attack, expressed his sorrow over the deaths of the police and said "national determination to completely eradicate terrorism from the country is unwavering".

Pakistan's foreign minister Ishaq Dar said he was "deeply grieved by the loss of precious lives in a cowardly terrorist attack on our police personnel in Kohat".

Islamabad accuses Kabul of allowing militants responsible for deadly attacks on Pakistani territory to operate from its soil. Afghanistan's Taliban authorities have denied the allegations.

Hundreds of civilians have been killed in fighting between the two countries since October last year, according to figures from the United Nations' mission in Afghanistan.

Earlier this month, militants in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa killed two police officers assigned to protect a polio vaccination team travelling near the Afghan border.

The province was placed under emergency rule last month in a move authorities said came in reaction to the failure by the provincial government to act against militancy.

The imposition of emergency measures sidelined the last remaining bastion of power for jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party.

The special constitutional measures also set off a province-wide crackdown on Khan's supporters, with hundreds of detentions. *– AFP*

2 sisters of jailed Pakistan ex-PM Khan released from prison

LAHORE – Two sisters of jailed Pakistani former prime minister Imran Khan were released from prison in Lahore yesterday, their lawyer and Khan's political party said.

Noreen Khan and Uzma Khan "were released from Kot Lakhpat at 2:00 p.m. [local time]", their advocate Rana Mudassar told AFP over the phone, explaining that the government had withdrawn their joint detention order, while a third sister, Aleema Khan, remained in prison.

Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party confirmed the release of the two sisters. But it said in a statement the move did not "erase the suffering inflicted on Imran Khan's family" and called for "no further persecution".

Khan, who served as premier from 2018 to 2022, has been behind bars since August 2023 and faces scores of charges ranging from corruption to treason following anti-establishment riots.

The 74-year-old former cricket star and his legal team reject the allegations, branding them as politically motivated cases aimed at neutralising his popularity.

Aleema, Uzma and Noreen were arrested and placed under 30-day detention orders in September after calls for protest by Khan's party which the government condemned as illegal.

Mudassar said lawyers had challenged a joint detention order for Noreen and Uzma Khan, which had been extended, but the authorities withdrew the order and released the pair ahead of a scheduled hearing.

He added that lawyers were also seeking the withdrawal of Aleema Khan's separate detention order.

In October, discontent over Khan's incarceration mounted with thousands protesting in the PTI's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa stronghold, particularly over his medical treatment and access to him by doctors and family.

The former prime minister briefly left prison overnight from Wednesday to yesterday for an eye examination and treatment before he was returned to Rawalpindi's central jail.

The Supreme Court ruled in August that Khan should be moved to a civilian hospital for treatment, but authorities instead returned him to prison after a short stay at a government-run hospital.

Once backed by the country's powerful military establishment during his rise to power, Khan fell out over key appointments and foreign policy issues before being ousted in a parliamentary vote of no confidence in 2022.

He has publicly accused the military leadership, including Army Chief General Asim Munir, of orchestrating his removal. The military denies meddling in politics. *– AFP*

Scores of Bangladesh garment factories shut in wage strike

DHAKA – Scores of Bangladeshi garment factories were shut yesterday as protesting workers demanded higher wages, prompting owners to consider withholding pay from those on strike.

The unrest, which began in October, threatens to disrupt an industry that earns around US$38 billion annually, accounting for four-fifths of the country's export earnings and employing more than four million workers.

The Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA) has called for calm as wage negotiations continue.

The South Asian nation of 170 million people is the world's second-biggest garment exporter behind China, supplying major international fashion brands.

Workers in key industrial zones of Gazipur, Ashulia and Savar went to their factories but refused to work and attempted to take to the streets, where police blocked them.

"These disruptions hurt everyone. Businesses lose money, workers lose working days, the economy takes a hit, and buyers start to question Bangladesh as a sourcing destination," said Mohiuddin Rubel, additional managing director of Denim Expert Ltd and a former BGMEA director.

"That damage is hard to undo."

Bangladesh's garment wage board agreed on November 4 to raise the minimum wage in the key sector after days of protests, with factories then restarting operations.

But the new wage rate will not be announced until December and is due to take effect in January, leaving workers uncertain about how much their pay will increase.

Workers are demanding a minimum monthly wage of 30,000 taka (US$240), a 140 percent increase from the current 12,500 taka.

Protests resumed on Wednesday, when BGMEA sources said more than 100 garment factories were shut. The BGMEA said it has more than 4,500 member factories in Bangladesh.

"We went to the factory in the morning, punched in and came back home," said garment worker Khanam, who gave only one name.

"I don't think the demonstrations will calm down soon. They will continue until the wage board comes up with a revised and acceptable wage."

BGMEA officials, who held an emergency meeting on Wednesday, said factory owners were considering a "no work, no pay" policy.

"The negotiations at the wage board and unrest in factories cannot go on simultaneously," BGMEA president Mahmudul Hasan said, according to the *Prothom Alo* newspaper. *– AFP*



Afghan children study inside a classroom at a private school in Fayzabad of Badakhshan province, Afghanistan yesterday. – AFP

Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang resigns

SAN FRANCISCO – Jensen Huang resigned as chief executive of AI giant Nvidia yeserday after revelations he had two extramarital affairs, including one with a woman accused of spying for China.

Chief financial officer Colette Kress will serve as interim CEO while the board searches for a permanent successor, the company said, ending Huang's 33-year run at the helm of the global juggernaut he co-founded.

Huang, 63, also gave up his seat on the board. The company did not give a reason for his departure.

The scandal has sent shares of the multi-trillion-US-dollar company plunging, and the exit of Huang, a close informal adviser to President Donald Trump on AI, leaves Nvidia without its leather-jacket-clad leader at a crucial time for the sector.

Huang was a central figure in the revolution set off by the launch of OpenAI's ChatGPT in 2022, with Nvidia's powerful processors, once intended for video game graphics, becoming the crucial ingredient for building the AI models now spreading across the world.

Huang remains Nvidia's largest individual shareholder, with a stake of about 3.6 percent, according to the company's most recent filing.

However, the stake gives him no special voting power, unlike founders at Meta or Google, who control their companies through super-voting shares

For many in Silicon Valley, the dramatic departure will compare to that of Steve Jobs, who was pushed out of Apple by its board in 1985 and returned 12 years later to take the company to new heights.

At the heart of the spy allegations is the race between the United States and China, with both superpowers trying to get ahead in an industry widely seen as the next industrial revolution.



Nvidia's then CEO Jensen Huang takes part in a press conference with Japanese multinational information and communications technology company Fujitsu in Tokyo on July 16. Huang resigned as president, board member and CEO of Nvidia yesterday, ending his 33-year run at the helm of the AI giant he co-founded, after revelations he had two extramarital affairs. – AFP

Nvidia shares were down as much as 13 percent in early trading on Wall Street yesterday following the announcement, with US$800 billion wiped off the company's valuation since the weekend.

Analyst Dan Ives of Yorkville Ives called it "a dark day for Nvidia and the US tech industry," but said the board had done what it needed to: "rip off the band-aid and take Nvidia into its next chapter without him."

The board said it had appointed Harvey Jones, a former chief executive of chip design software firm Synopsys, as chair.

"The Board has full confidence in Colette and the leadership team, and we expect the company's operations, customer commitments and product roadmap to continue without interruption," Jones said in a statement.

Kress said she was committed to "building on the extraordinary foundation Jensen created over the last 33 years."

Two affairs

The scandal began with reports that Huang, who has been married to his wife Lori Huang for more than 40 years after meeting at university, was involved in an extramarital relationship.

Jensen Huang admitted on Sunday to having an affair, reportedly with Alice Huang, who was a senior executive at Singapore-based data centre company Megaspeed. The two are not related.

US intelligence reportedly circulated a memo this spring alleging Alice Huang was an asset of China's Ministry of State Security.

Beijing has rejected the spying allegations.

On Sunday, Nvidia's board announced a probe into what it called reporting that Huang had been the target of a "foreign intelligence effort," while saying it retained confidence in him.

However, on Wednesday, *The New York Times* reported that Huang had a second extramarital affair, citing video evidence of him being affectionate with Nvidia's vice president of health care, Kimberly Powell.

Powell, 48, has been a public face of Nvidia's efforts to expand its technology into higher education and health care. She was speaking at a conference in San Jose, California, where the two "were seen being affectionate at the hotel" by bystanders, the newspaper reported.

Nvidia's code of conduct tells employees to avoid conflicts of interest and cites the example of "personal relationships."

Successor search

Huang had repeatedly avoided naming a successor when the question was raised.

Kress joined Nvidia as finance chief in 2013 after nearly 25 years in financial roles at companies including Cisco and Microsoft.

Nvidia's processors are mostly made by Taiwanese company TSMC, the world's largest contract manufacturer of chips.

Nvidia said it would release its quarterly results as scheduled on November 17. – *AFP*

Siemens sees no AI slowdown despite Republican rout in US

FRANKFURT AM MAIN – The midterm elections rout for US President Donald Trump's Republicans is unlikely to slow the AI boom, German industrial giant Siemens said yesterday as it reported record profits boosted by data centre demand.

Fears that Democrats could clamp down on data centre construction after seizing control of Congress hit stock markets worldwide last week.

Speaking on an earnings call, Siemens CEO Roland Busch said the company was banking on the boom carrying on even if the elections had shown growing opposition to data centres.

"There are discussions on the one side, on the other side there's bipartisan acknowledgment that a big driver of economic growth in the United States is data centres," Busch said.

"There's nothing that worries us, at least not for the next couple of years," he added.

US tech giants such as Microsoft and Meta have together invested hundreds of billions of US dollars in AI data centres, boosting the fortunes of companies like Siemens that make much of the electrical and cooling equipment needed to operate the sites.

Swiss competitor ABB in October posted order growth of 40 percent for the three months to end-September, while France's Schneider Electric in the same month said sales growth over the period had beaten expectations.

Other European companies involved in the AI supply chain have also urged calm and say they see solid growth ahead.

Jochen Hanebeck, CEO of German semiconductor maker Infineon, said on Monday that he expected more data centres to be built globally even if constructing them in the United States became more complicated.

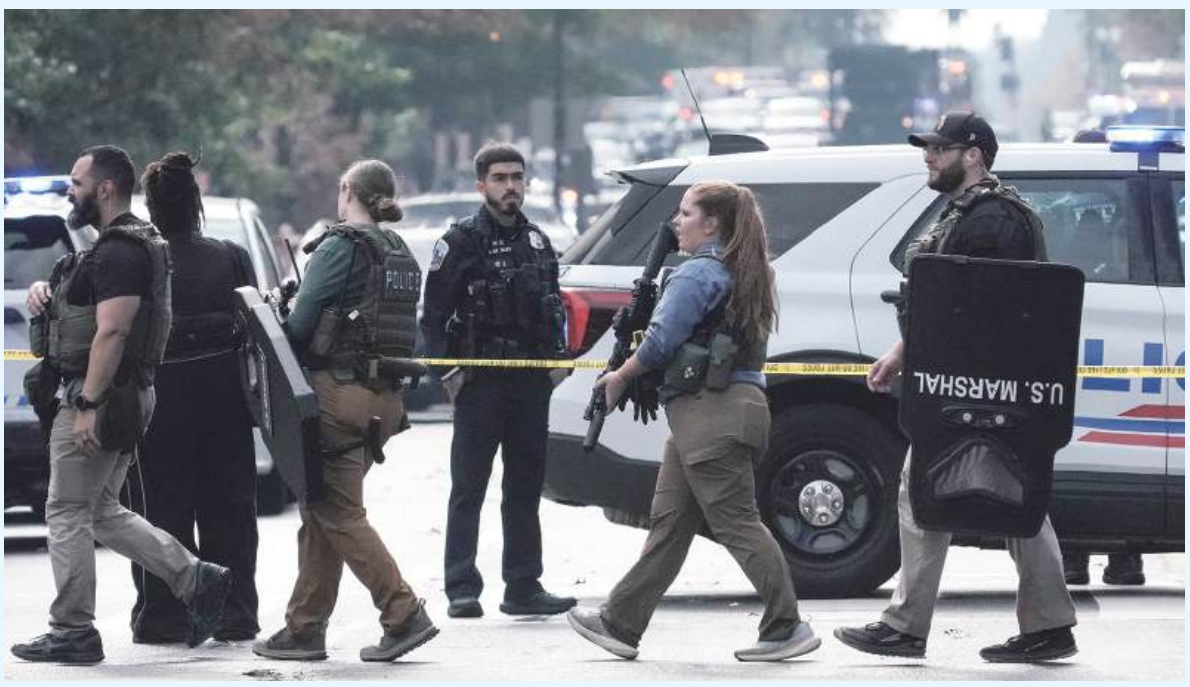
Reporting results for its fiscal year to end-September, Siemens said its core profit, which strips out some effects such as the sale of motor-maker Innomotics in the last fiscal year, rose 13 percent to 13.3 billion euros (US$14.7 billion).

For the fourth quarter alone, orders – an indicator of future sales – at Siemens' "smart infrastructure" business climbed 40 percent to 8.67 billion euros, helped by triple-digit growth in orders from data centre customers.

Siemens said it expected further growth in the current business year, guiding for sales to rise nine to 11 percent as well as broadly stable or higher profit margins at its two biggest divisions.

The company's shares opened up 4.1 percent in Frankfurt trading yesterday. Their price has more than doubled since the release of ChatGPT in November 2022. – *AFP*

One dead, 4 wounded in Washington shooting: police



Law enforcement personnel walk across a street near the scene of a deadly shooting in Washington, DC, yesterday. – AFP

WASHINGTON, DC – One person was killed and four wounded in a shooting at and outside a fitness centre in an upscale residential neighbourhood of downtown Washington yesterday, police said.

Jeffery Carroll, Washington's interim police chief, told reporters the suspect in the shooting had been found with a self-inflicted gunshot wound after barricading himself in his nearby apartment unit.

Carroll said the man, who was not identified, was apparently in "some sort of a conflict" with the homeowners association of the apartment building, which is located in the Logan Circle area of the nation's capital, about a 1.6 km north of the White House.

The police chief said the person who died had been shot inside a fitness centre.

One of the four wounded was in critical condition while the injuries to the others did not appear to be life-threatening, Carroll said.

The condition of the gunman was not immediately known.

There was a massive police response to the shooting, which occurred during the busy morning rush hour.

Dozens of vehicles from multiple law enforcement vehicles were seen racing to the scene as police helicopters hovered overhead.

Some residents were evacuated from the area by police while others were told to shelter in place.

The Washington Sun digital news outlet quoted a member of the VIDA Fitness gym as saying that he was on a treadmill at the workout facility when the shooting began.

Michael Carney said he heard a "pop" and then saw someone on the gym floor who had been shot in the head.

"Everyone was kind of just hiding behind planters and stuff," Carney told the news outlet. – *AFP*

Spanish parliament passes housing measures after protests, strike

MADRID – The Spanish parliament yesterday passed measures restricting evictions and aiming to make housing more affordable, after a general strike and weeks of protests over the issue which catalysed a snap election.

But MPs rejected the automatic renewal of tenant contracts, a key demand of housing activists. The right-wing opposition, which leads most polls before the November 29 vote, has vowed to repeal the measures.

Unaffordable housing has been a running sore for years in Spain but the eviction of 87-year-old Madrid pensioner Maricarmen Abascal from her lifelong home in September, and her subsequent death, sparked national uproar.

Large demonstrations swept the country and protest camps sprang up for weeks in several cities, the largest in Madrid's emblematic Puerta del Sol square.

Aiming to placate the widespread anger, Socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's government rushed to present two decrees that included greater protection for tenants against evictions and the automatic renewal of tenant contracts.

But his minority government failed to pass them in parliament, prompting Sánchez to call a general election that had been scheduled for 2027.

On Wednesday, hundreds of thousands of Spaniards hit the streets in a general strike over affordable housing, wages and public services



The leader of Spain's right-wing party Vox, Santiago Abascal, waves as he leaves after a pre-election campaign event in Logroño, northwestern Spain, yesterday. Spain is due to hold a snap general election on November 29, following eight years of Socialist-led government. – AFP

that the main unions called after the decrees were rejected.

Sánchez introduced another two decrees that were almost identical to the rejected ones, which were examined yesterday in a smaller parliamentary council that gave the government a better chance of passing the laws.

The measures that succeeded included some key demands by activists following the eviction of Abascal, who was forced out of her home after the real estate company that owned it drastically hiked the rent.

They restrict the eviction of vulnerable tenants without alternative accommodation until the end of 2030 and curb the acquisition of homes by so-called vulture funds, a much-maligned target of the protests that buy properties at low prices in pursuit of higher returns.

Parliament's Standing Council, made up of 69 members including MPs and the speaker, reflects the size of the groups in the 350-seat chamber which had repeatedly thwarted Sanchez's initiatives.

The stance of pro-business Catalan separatists Junts, whose seven MPs voted down both of the original decrees, was no longer decisive as the party only has one representative in the council.

The main conservative opposition People's Party (PP), which tops most polls, says the measures will negatively affect the housing market, proposing a building spree as the solution to the crisis. – *AFP*

Trump threatens to double Mexico tariffs over migrant caravans

WASHINGTON, DC – US President Donald Trump yesterday threatened to double tariffs on Mexico unless it can keep migrant caravans from reaching the common border, something the Mexican government has been regularly doing.

"They will not be accepted! MEXICO MUST STOP THEM, NOW, and if they do not do so, the Tariffs on Mexico will be IMMEDIATELY DOUBLED," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

The Mexican government has intervened to block several groups of migrants travelling up from Central America since September, but at least two more groups have attempted the journey in recent days.

Members of the caravans, one with about 1,000 people and another numbering around 100, have told AFP they hoped that the midterm election defeat of Trump's Republicans would result in less stringent US border restrictions.

Democrats swept both chambers of Congress and won the governorship of Texas for the first time in more than three decades.

Mexican security personnel intervened against the group of 100 people on Tuesday after they crossed a river separating Mexico from Guatemala, reportedly detaining dozens of people.

Two days earlier, however, the group of 1,000 people crossed the border without encountering resistance.

Such caravans were a frequent occurrence during Trump's first term and during the administration of Joe Biden.

Since Trump's return to office on a hard-line anti-immigration agenda, illegal border crossings have plummeted.

He has also heaped pressure on Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum to increase her country's own efforts at impeding migrants from reaching the border.

"Here we go again! With the perceived loss by the Republicans in the Midterms... the INVASION of our Country is taking place again," Trump said yesterday.

"There will be no leniency!" he warned. – *AFP*

Portugal relieved as storm passes without major damage

LISBON – Storm Charles passed over Portugal yesterday without leaving the destruction the country had widely feared in its wake, after the authorities ordered schools closed as a precaution.

While forecasters had feared that gale-force winds of up to 140 kilometres per hour would lash the Iberian nation, in the end the strongest gusts recorded were weaker than 100 km/h.

One person was wounded and four people were nonetheless evacuated as a result of the storm, national civil protection chief Mário Silvestre told a press conference, while some flooding and falling trees were recorded.

Storm Charles's passing came after Portugal was battered by six successive storms between January 22 and February 16, which authorities said left at least seven dead. Some Portuguese media put the toll higher at nearly 20 direct and indirect victims. – *AFP*

Venezuelan leader drums up oil investment at UN climate talks

Álvaro Villalobos

ANTALYA, Venezuela – Venezuela's interim president Delcy Rodríguez and her team are at the UN climate talks with an unusual agenda: drumming up oil investment and defending the use of fossil fuels.

Addressing the COP31 summit in Turkey yesterday, Rodríguez insisted on her country's "sovereign right" to develop its oil industry.

"We believe there is no inevitable contradiction between energy development and environmental protection, because a just transition does not shut down economies – it transforms them," said Rodríguez, whose country is home to the world's biggest proven oil reserves.

She and her delegation at the talks, which includes Venezuelan oil minister Paula Henao, have put that stance into action with a series of meetings seeking investment in the country's badly underfunded crude industry.

On Wednesday, Rodriguez held a bilateral meeting with Brazil's President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, during which the pair talked about increasing Brazilian investment in Venezuela's oil sector.

Yesterday, Henao met with Turkish Energy Minister Alparslan Bayraktar, whose country is keen to develop oil and gas projects overseas.

"We comprehensively discussed potential joint projects in the hydrocarbons sector, particularly oil and natural gas," Bayraktar said on X.

Balancing act

Rodríguez, who became interim leader in January, after US troops captured Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro in a dramatic raid, is looking to breathe new life into her crisis-racked country's languishing oil sector.

The industry has suffered from decades of underinvestment and sanctions, and its export revenues are now under US oversight – including a deal for US access to more than 65 billion barrels of oil, about 20 percent of Venezuela's proven reserves.

But Rodríguez's oil push is at odds with the key climate conference goal of weaning the world off fossil fuels.

Brazil, which hosted last year's talks, is pushing for every country to draw up a road map for transitioning away from fossil fuels.

However, in a delicate balancing act, veteran leftist Lula continues to champion oil exploration, a key sector for Brazil.

Lula, whose country is Latin America's top crude producer, argues oil revenues can help fund the clean-energy transition.

Brazilian Environment Minister João Paulo Capobianco addressed the controversy that stance has caused when asked about Lula's meeting with Rodriguez.

"We don't believe there's any contradiction, because Brazil is pursuing an accelerated energy transition agenda, it's the country that invests the most in biofuels," he told a press conference.

But he added that oil "is still a strategic resource from an international point of view".

Contradictions a 'habit'

Venezuela's lingering focus on oil – out of sync with the prevailing rhetoric at the conference on curbing planet-warming fossil fuels – is a product of the country's crude "dependency" going back decades, said former Colombian environment minister Irene Vélez Torres.

As for Brazil, "yes, there are contradictions" on fossil fuels, though that is common among oil- and gas-producing nations, she told AFP.

"These contradictions are permanent fixtures of our national agendas, of the political tensions that have to be navigated," said Vélez, who co-organised the First International Conference on Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels in Colombia in April, bringing together nearly 60 countries.

Such contradictions have become a "habit" in climate negotiations, said Ariel Slipak, research coordinator at the Argentina-based Environment and Natural Resources Foundation (FARN), criticising planet-saving plans that get announced to great fanfare but "never get implemented". – *AFP*



Venezuela's interim President Delcy Rodríguez speaks during a conference of the Venezuelan Confederation of Industrialists at the Eurobuilding Hotel in Caracas on November 3. – AFP

'Dictator' Infantino needs psychiatric help, says former FIFA chief Blatter

BERLIN - Former FIFA boss Sepp Blatter has slammed current chief Gianni Infantino, calling his successor a "dictator" and suggesting he needs psychiatric help, in an interview with *Der Spiegel* published Wednesday.

Blatter, 90, criticised Infantino's decision to create the FIFA Peace Prize award for US President Donald Trump in the lead-up to this year's World Cup, hosted in the US, Canada and Mexico.

He was also critical of Infantino's post-World Cup plans to sell off part of the commercial rights of the competition in the future, which was scrapped after a fierce backlash.

"FIFA is suffering. It is currently led by a person who has allowed himself to be blinded," Blatter told the German magazine.

The Peace Prize, he said, was "embarrassing".

"Why would he do something like that?," Blatter asked. "Infantino awards a peace prize to someone who wages war against Iran shortly afterwards? That's madness."

Blatter said it was easy for Infantino to secure support for his own re-election from national football bodies.

"'If you vote for me,' he tells the national associations, 'You will get much more money than before.'

"He is a dictator. People in FIFA tell me that no one is allowed to ride in the elevator with him. He is 'untouchable'."

Speaking of Infantino's World Cup sale plans, Blatter said: "Infantino no longer knows any borders. He doesn't understand any of this.

"I mean, maybe Infantino should be sent to a psychiatric ward one day."

Blatter was also critical of FIFA's decision to suspend a red card awarded to USA striker Folarin Balogun after Trump intervened ahead of a crucial match at this summer's World Cup.

"The red card. That's the worst. Statutes can be interpreted. But rules of the game must apply to everyone, you can't interpret them."

'Fulfilling his duties': FIFA

When contacted for comment by AFP however, FIFA pointed to its previous response to *Der Spiegel*, which countered Blatter's statements.

FIFA rebutted allegations Infantino had acted inappropriately, saying he "is fulfilling his duties as president through his travels," while adding: "The suspension imposed on Folarin Balogun following a red card was lifted by independent FIFA judicial bodies."

"Mr Infantino does indeed use the elevator at FIFA, but does so when other people are present," FIFA said in the statement.

President of FIFA from 1998, Blatter resigned in disgrace in 2015 amid corruption allegations, including accusations he had sought to buy votes for his presidency.

Charges were brought against him but Blatter was eventually cleared in two trials but was banned from football by FIFA's ethics committee.

Blatter told the magazine he had "no regrets" from his time in charge of the organisation.

Japanese official Kozo Tashima has announced plans to run against Infantino in his re-election bid, but Blatter named World Athletics president Sebastian Coe as his pick to take over FIFA.

"It is not important who is running. What is important is that the incumbent president is no longer elected.

"Coe was also chairman of the FIFA Ethics Committee. He is a strong personality. A president from the motherland of football, England, would be good."

Blatter said he had not spoken with Infantino since early 2016. – *AFP*



FIFA president Gianni Infantino (centre), accompanied by senior officials from the Local Organising Committee of the FIFA U-17 World Cup Qatar 2026, visits the Aspire Zone competition complex in Doha, Qatar yesterday.
The United States withdrew Wednesday from the upcoming Under-17 football World Cup in Qatar due to concerns about security in the Middle East.
Players were informed of the decision just over a week before the tournament is due to begin on November 19, in a letter sent by the sport's US governing body.
"We are writing to inform you of the difficult decision to cancel our World Cup pre-camp and our planned participation in the World Cup," said the letter, seen by AFP.
"We are extremely proud of the preparation by our players and coaches to represent the US in the World Cup.
"Unfortunately, in light of current circumstances including the US State Department's Level 3 Travel Advisory for Qatar and related directives for Embassy staff and families, we are no longer able to participate in the tournament.
"The well-being of our players and staff will always be our top priority." – AFP

Carrick the fall guy for deeper problems at Man Utd

Kieran Canning

MANCHESTER – Michael Carrick is the latest in a long line of managers to be sacked by Manchester United as they struggle to recapture former glories, but their problems run far deeper than the dugout.

For the first time in 40 years, the 20-time English champions find themselves in the Premier League relegation zone at this stage of the season.

Carrick was handed the job on a permanent basis fewer than six months ago after revitalising the team following the acrimonious departure of Ruben Amorim in January.

Under the 45-year-old, then operating as interim boss, United finished third in the Premier League, securing a return to the Champions League after two seasons away.

But the optimism quickly vanished at the start of this season and for the third consecutive campaign, woeful results have forced United into a mid-season managerial change.

The Red Devils have won just three of their opening 15 games in all competitions.

Carrick joins David Moyes, Louis van Gaal, Jose Mourinho, Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Erik ten Hag and Amorim among the managers who have struggled to arrest United's overall decline, despite the occasional trophy, since Alex Ferguson retired in 2013.

The Scot stepped down after collecting his 13th Premier League winner's medal, at the end of a period of dominance in English football and European success.

Now United, almost unbelievably, find themselves in a battle just to stay in the English top flight, where they have been ever-present for more than 50 years.

USA head coach Mauricio Pochettino – the hot favourite to replace Carrick – faces the task of uniting a deeply divided club on and off the pitch.



Manchester United's English coach Michael Carrick reacts prior to the UEFA Champions League, league phase matchday 3, match against Como 1907 at the Stadio Giuseppe Sinigaglia in Como, northern Italy on October 21. - AFP

United captain Bruno Fernandes was dropped last month after he criticised Carrick's tactics following a 4-1 humbling by Como.

And defender Lisandro Martinez took a public swipe at the United hierarchy for not doing more to strengthen the squad in the summer transfer window.

Carrick's role as a player in the glory days under Ferguson meant he retained support among the fanbase despite a string of substandard displays.

Blame game

The anger of the supporters is instead firmly directed towards the club's owners, whom they hold responsible for overseeing United's slide.

Despite fierce and persistent protests over two decades, the US-based Glazer family still hold a majority stake in the club, which Malcolm Glazer bought via a leveraged takeover in 2005, saddling United with huge debts.

Any hopes that the arrival of British billionaire Jim Ratcliffe as a minority owner in 2024 would signal a new dawn have since faded.

Ratcliffe, founder and chairman of industrial giant INEOS, has overseen cost-cutting measures, including widespread redundancies, and hiked up ticket prices, but the club's debt has still soared above £1.1 billion (US$1.46 billion).

Former United captain Gary Neville has lamented the "inept" ownership and leadership of his boyhood club.

The Manchester United Supporters' Trust (MUST), meanwhile, issued a statement following Carrick's dismissal pinning the blame for poor results firmly on the ownership.

"The Glazers' debt-funded takeover continues to burden the club," MUST said in a statement. "When INEOS came in they promised sporting excellence, but yet with repeated changes in football leadership we have seen anything but.

"It is time for the owners to explain themselves and show some accountability."

Another huge issue is the future of Old Trafford. The biggest club stadium in English football now looks tired and outdated.

Plans for a new 100,000-seater venue have not been universally welcomed and it remains unclear how that project would be financed.

"We don't want a new stadium, we want new owners," read a banner at Sunday's chaotic 4-4 draw at home to Aston Villa, which proved to be Carrick's last game in charge.

"You can keep changing the manager and thinking that's going to be the answer," said Neville. "(If) you've not got leadership that is strong right through the spine of the football club you will fail."

United last dropped out of the top division in 1974. They cannot afford to let it happen again. – *AFP*

Football shorts

N and S Korea to clash on road to Los Angeles Olympics

KUALA LUMPUR – North Korea and South Korea will face off in women's football with a prized berth at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics at stake.

Yesterday's draw at Asian Football Confederation headquarters in Kuala Lumpur lumped the two Koreas - who are still technically at war - together in qualifying Group B.

The neighbours are scheduled to play each other twice, home and away. Also in a competitive group are China and the Philippines.

Group A comprises Australia, Taiwan, Uzbekistan and Asian champions Japan.

The winners of each group qualify for the 2028 Games, with the two second-placed sides going into playoffs.

Group-stage matches will take place between April 19 and December 4, 2027.

North and South Korea clashed at the Asian Games in Japan in September, with a niggly encounter ending 1-1.

There was a total of 27 fouls during the match, the first after less than 30 seconds.

The two countries remain technically at war because the 1950-53 Korean war ended with an armistice rather than a peace treaty. – *AFP*

Lyon thrash Juventus to go top in Women's Champions League

PARIS – Lyon climbed to the top of the Women's Champions League table as Marie-Antoinette Katoto scored twice in a thumping 6-0 victory at Juventus on Wednesday.

The eight-time European champions moved onto 10 points from four matches in the 18-team league phase, one point above holders Barcelona who will bid to maintain their 100-percent record when they welcomed 2025 winners Arsenal to the Camp Nou early this morning Macau time.

Lyon dominated early on but had to wait until the 31st minute to take the lead, when farcical Juve defending and ponderous goalkeeping from Danielle de Jong allowed Katoto to hook in a close-range volley.

Katoto doubled the advantage just four minutes later with a cool finish after some neat footwork, scoring for the seventh time in the competition this season.

Melchie Dumornay pounced on another defensive error to make it three before half-time.

Teenager Lily Yohannes scored with 10 minutes remaining and there was still time for her fellow American Korbin Shrader and Wendie Renard - via a rebound after De Jong saved her weak attempted Panenka penalty - to complete the rout.

Lyon have yet to concede in the league phase, while Juve remain eighth in the table with six points.

Danish side Koge climbed above Inter Milan and Roma into 10th place as Simone Boye's 82nd -minute strike salvaged a 1-1 draw at second-bottom Leuven in Belgium.

Benfica's game against Austria Vienna in Lisbon was postponed until yesterday due to the effects of Storm Charles.

On Tuesday, Chelsea were held to a goalless draw by Hacken, while Manchester City belatedly got their first win by beating Inter 4-1. – *AFP*

China wins inaugural gymnastics mixed team gold at 2026 YOG

DAKAR – China won the first gymnastics mixed team title at the 2026 Youth Olympic Games (YOG) on Wednesday, with Yang Lanbin and Chen Ziyan combining for a steady performance across three rounds.

Yang scored 13.966 points on the floor exercise and Chen earned 13.866 on the balance beam. Japan took silver, while Israel claimed bronze.

"It was an event that really put the team's tactics to the test. I just had to believe in myself. I knew I could do it. Having practiced so much, you're bound to succeed. I just knew I could make it," Chen said.

The gymnastics mixed team event, making its debut at the Youth Olympics, featured 12 teams, each comprising one man and one woman.

The competition consisted of three rounds, with the bottom four teams eliminated after each of the first two rounds. In each round, the male gymnast selected one event from floor exercise, parallel bars and horizontal bar, while the female gymnast chose from uneven bars, balance beam and floor exercise. The two scores were added together to determine the team's result for that round.

The gymnasts could not both choose floor exercise in the same round, and neither athlete could repeat an event in subsequent rounds.

Yang and Chen opened with solid routines on the parallel bars and floor exercise, respectively, to finish second in the first round and advance. Daniil Smirnov, who had won the men's individual all-around title on Tuesday, fell off the horizontal bar, resulting in Russia's elimination.

China topped the second round after Yang and Chen delivered steady performances on the horizontal bar and uneven bars, respectively.

"We focused on consistency today and arranged for both gymnasts to perform their strongest events in the final round as they competed with their last opponents for the gold," China coach Zhang Xia said.

In boxing, China's Zhang Zhengkun lost to Puerto Rico's Jesfred Joel Torres Santiago in the men's 60kg semifinals, and shared the bronze medal with Türkiye's Muhammet Ali Arli.

Zhang said, "I am very proud to have represented my country, and I hope to compete for my country in the future. My only regret is that I couldn't reach the top of the podium this time."

In the women's beach handball, China lost 2-1 to France in the quarterfinals before falling to Mexico in the 5-8 playoffs.

In the women's windsurfing, Wu Ziyan stood third overall after 12 races, with the final three races scheduled for yesterday.

In fencing, Canada's Simon Shan defeated Serbia's Vukan Radjenovic to win the men's epee title.

Taekwondo concluded its last three individual events on Wednesday. Serbia's Ema Zecirovic won the women's +63kg title, while Jordan's Ahmad Aldahamsheh and Iran's Benyamin Soltanian claimed gold in the men's 73kg and +73kg categories, respectively.

In the women's futsal, Ukraine beat Venezuela 4-3 in the final to claim gold, while Iran defeated Italy 5-2 to take bronze. – *Xinhua*

Games photos on page 16

Medal Tally

Rank	National				
1	CHN	17	8	7	32
2	JPN	9	8	9	26
3	RUS	8	4	2	14
4	EGY	6	1	5	12
5	ETH	5	3		8
6	SEN	5		5	10
7	FRA	4	5	4	13
8	KEN	4	2		6
9	RSA	3	5	3	11
10	CRO	3	4		7
11	AZE	3	3		6
12	UKR	3	2	3	8
13	BRA	3	2	1	6
14	NGR	3			3
15	ESP	2	4	4	10
16	TPE	2	3	3	8
17	HUN	2	3	2	7
18	VEN	2	3	1	6
19	NZL	2	3		5
20	ITA	2	2	4	8
21	GER	2	2	3	7
21	HKG	2	2	3	7
21	KAZ	2	2	3	7
24	USA	2	2	2	6
25	GRE	2	2	1	5
25	JAM	2	2	1	5
27	ROU	2	2		4
28	POR	2	1	2	5



Hsieh Su-Wei of Chinese Taipei (from left to right) and Jelena Ostapenko of Latvia, Shuai Zhang of China and Elise Mertens of Belgium pose at the net during day four of the FAGE WTA Finals at Indian Wells Tennis Garden on Wednesday in Indian Wells, California. Hsieh and Ostapenko won the match 7-5, 6-3.

– AFP

Andreeva powers past Sabalenka to reach WTA Finals last 4

Tennis

LOS ANGELES – French Open champion Mirra Andreeva stormed past Aryna Sabalenka 6-4, 6-0 to reach the last four of the WTA Finals on Wednesday as Elina Svitolina kept her bid on track with a three-set win over Karolina Muchova.

Russian 19-year-old Andreeva held her nerve after falling behind 4-1 in the opening set - winning the last 11 games to seal the round-robin victory in just 62 minutes.

"Oh my God, I'm even happier than I was after my first match," Andreeva said. "I feel like I can play another two matches, I'm so full of energy. I'm so pumped up. I'm so happy."

Andreeva, whose three titles this year include her maiden major at Roland Garros, is making her singles debut in the elite season-ending event.

The world number three seemed to be feeling the nerves in the early going against second-ranked Sabalenka.

Irked that she had given up a break with a double fault, she was able to flip the switch, dealing handily with Sabalenka's big serves and pushing the Belarusian star back with her own big groundstrokes.

Andreeva crucially kept momentum on her side with a break for a 3-0 lead in the second set.

Sabalenka, trailing 0-40, saved three break points, but Andreeva gave herself another with a swinging volley winner and grabbed another break when a Sabalenka forehand flew just long.

The increasingly demoralised Sabalenka had no answer. After the Belarusian smacked a backhand into the net to give her opponent match point Andreeva polished things off with a service winner.

It was another disappointing performance for the 28-year-old Sabalenka, whose three wins this season include prestigious back-to-back victories at Indian Wells and Miami but no Grand Slams.

Making her sixth straight Finals appearance, Sabalenka can still advance if she beats Svitolina in their final round-robin match today.

Svitolina roared back from a set down to beat Muchova 3-6, 6-2, 6-2.

Ukrainian veteran Svitolina lifted the WTA Finals trophy in 2018 but hadn't been back to the elite season-ending event since 2019.

She got off to a rocky start against Muchova, who broke Svitolina three times in the opening set.

Trailing 2-1 on serve in the second Svitolina found her range, winning five straight games to force a third set.

"I was not happy with the first set," Svitolina said. "I didn't play as well. I just made some adjustments, tactical adjustments.

"I think it helped me also to be more aggressive, because I was too passive in the first set," Svitolina said.

Muchova's second round-robin defeat coupled with Andreeva's victory means the Czech was eliminated from semi-final contention.

– AFP

Sinner admits that knee injury left him barely able to move

Tennis

ROME – Missing from this year's ATP Finals, title holder Jannik Sinner admitted that he's had days on which he could barely move due to the knee injury which has kept him out of action since winning Wimbledon.

Sinner, who was world number one until being displaced by Alexander Zverev earlier this month, recently said that he will make his comeback at the "Six Kings Slam" tournament in Saudi Arabia, which has been rescheduled for late December due to the conflict with Yemen's Houthis.

"I had days where I felt nothing and I could play without any problems and then I had days where I couldn't move at all," Sinner said in a video published on his YouTube channel.

"The worst part for me about this injury is that I cannot compete, I cannot play tennis.

"Also, my life outside of tennis is a bit more limited because of a simple fact that I cannot do things that I really like, because I want to protect my knee."

Sinner had been having another superb season before succumbing to his knee injury, and he revealed in the video published Wednesday that tonsil surgery caused him to lose a lot of weight.

Before his knee injury, which prematurely ended his season, Sinner had won five consecutive Masters 1000 tournaments - Indian Wells, Miami, Monte Carlo, Madrid, and Rome - to complete his set of top-tier ATP events, before being crowned Wimbledon champion for the second straight year.

"I'm not going to lie, it's also tough to see other players play and I cannot compete," said Sinner.

"Also, because the season I've had, it has been an incredible season until the moment when everything happened and it switches from a very very positive season to a very tough ending of season even though I had a lot of success."

Last week Sinner announced that Magnus Norman will replace his long-time coach Darren Cahill, who helped shape the Italian into the world's top tennis player. – *AFP*

The 'Grand Theft Auto' saga in numbers

PARIS – Ahead of the debut of "Grand Theft Auto VI" on November 19, here are the key numbers that highlight the violent video game's success since the series was launched in 1997.

480 million

That is the number of Grand Theft Auto games sold so far by its creator Rockstar Games. "GTA V" alone has sold nearly 235 million units since its 2013 release, according to figures from Rockstar's parent company, Take-Two Interactive, published on Monday.

Released for the PlayStation and Xbox consoles as well as PCs, the game is the second best-selling video game behind "Minecraft".

17

With the release of "GTA VI", that is the number of stand-alone titles and expansion packs in the series, along with GTA Online.

3

It took just three days for "GTA V" to reach US$1 billion in sales after its 2013 release, two days less than the movie "Avengers: Endgame". Take-Two says it was the fastest time any entertainment product had taken to reach the billion-US-dollar mark.

212

"GTA VI" takes up 212 gigabytes (GB) at launch, making it one of the "biggest" video games created. It will need at least 45 minutes and possibly hours to download, depending on a computer's internet speed.

Rockstar Games made the game available for pre-loading this week in a bid to ease the strain on computer servers on launch day.

13

Fans have waited 13 years since the release of "GTA V" for the latest instalment in the series. "GTA VI" was initially scheduled for late 2025 but was delayed twice, with Rockstar saying it needed extra time "to finish the game with the level of polish you have come to expect".

6

The number of playable female characters in all the GTA games since 1997, before the introduction of Lucia Caminos in "GTA VI".

90

The number of videos showing development phases for "GTA VI" that were stolen and put online in 2022.

4,000

The number of articles written about the Grand Theft Auto game up to 2009, according to Guinness World Records, which called it the world's most controversial video game franchise.

75

The fictional "GTA V" city of Los Santos and its suburbs is made up of 75 square kilometres of territory, according to its official map.

For "GTA VI", Rockstar has promised a map twice as big to encompass Vice City and the fictional state of Leonida, reportedly based on Florida.

861

The number of actors used to dub voices in the "GTA IV" game, according to the 2009 Guinness World Records book. Participants included Guns N' Roses singer Axl Rose, actor Samuel L. Jackson and the rapper and actor Ice-T. *– AFP*

Grand Theft Auto Online: top video game's roleplay cash cow



A giant poster advertising Grand Theft Auto 6 adorns the side of a building in Melbourne's central business district yesterday. – AFP

PARIS – One of the world's best-selling video games, "Grand Theft Auto V" owes much of its staying power to its online multiplayer version.

As fans await the release of the follow-up "GTA VI" on November 19, attention is also turning to the online platform run by the franchise's creator, Rockstar Games.

Thirteen years after the game's release, "GTA Online" continues to attract millions of players through content updates and a thriving roleplay community.

Launched two weeks after "GTA V" in 2013, the online version shares the same core gameplay, allowing players to mount heists and combat missions in a virtual city inspired by Los Angeles.

Unlike the single-player game, however, it lets users create custom characters, join forces with other players and compete against rival teams.

According to the market research firm Circana, "GTA V", including its online component, ranked as the third most-played game on PlayStation and Xbox consoles in the United States last year.

In 2026, the game boasted more than 15 million monthly active users worldwide.

"It is a phenomenally, massively successful thing," Christopher Dring, head of the specialist publication The Game Business, told AFP.

"'GTA 5' is always in the top-selling games every year. 'GTA Online' is incredibly important."

He said the online mode accounts for much of the nearly US$500 million in annual revenue generated by the Grand Theft Auto franchise.

Purchased separately from GTA or by subscription, the online game also draws revenue from small transactions by players spending real money on virtual currency, vehicles and other in-game items.

For many players, the attraction lies in the game's evolving social world.

"I have logged more than 1,000 hours, but I always come back when there is a new update to discover it with my friends," said 20-year-old player Lucas Vigne.

A key driver of engagement is the game's roleplay potential, with players assuming "professions" such as police officer, doctor or gangster.

"It's a bit like improvisational theatre," said Gabriel Berranger, a 19-year-old history student and former in-game police officer.

While the company has yet to announce an online follow-up, many analysts expect a "GTA Online 2" to launch in 2027. *– AFP*

Stacy Keach, electrifying actor of stage and screen, dead at 85

WASHINGTON, DC – Stacy Keach, the prolific and acclaimed American tough-guy actor who thrived in theatre, film and television, and whose roles ranged from Hamlet to detective Mike Hammer, has died, his wife said on Wednesday. He was 85.

Malgosia Tomassi confirmed the news in a statement to Hollywood trade magazine *Variety*, saying her husband died on Tuesday "after a long and difficult battle with a serious heart condition and heart failure."

The versatile and prolific Keach was a force of nature when he burst onto Broadway in the mid-1960s, winning praise as one of America's greatest Shakespearean actors and earning a Tony Award nomination for his role in "Indians."

His silver screen debut in "The Heart is a Lonely Hunter" kicked off a six-decade career that spanned more than 100 movies.

In "Fat City," the unsentimental 1972 film directed by John Huston and co-starring Jeff Bridges, Keach earned critical praise for his gritty portrayal of a washed-up boxer, and it established him as one of Hollywood's most serious actors.

He also delivered top-tier performances as Doc Holliday in "Doc" from 1971, "The New Centurions" and "The Long Riders."

Keach was widely celebrated for his role as the seen-it-all private eye in the hit TV series "The New Mike Hammer," based on the gruff noir detective in the pulp novels of Mickey Spillane, whom Keach revered and eventually befriended.

Keach – who claimed in his autobiography "All in All" that he shared the same drug dealer as John Belushi – nearly saw his career derailed when he was arrested in 1984 at London's Heathrow airport trying to smuggle cocaine in a shaving cream can.

"Busted, like some common perp on 'Mike Hammer.' I knew how stupid I had been," he wrote. Keach pleaded guilty, and served six months in jail at England's Reading Prison.

He bounced back with a Golden-Globe-winning portrayal of writer Ernest Hemingway in the 1988 television miniseries "Hemingway," and he drew new fans in the 2010s by playing New York's archbishop in the long-running CBS drama "Blue Bloods," and with a recurring voice role on iconic series "The Simpsons."

– AFP

World Weather

CHINA		ASIA-PACIFIC		WORLD		LUSOPHONE	
Beijing	5°C~12°C	Manila	27°C~33°C	New York	4°C~7°C	Lisbon	16°C~19°C
Shanghai	17°C~19°C	Bangkok	27°C~32°C	London	0°C~7°C	Rio de Janeiro	22°C~27°C
Hong Kong	21°C~26°C	Tokyo	12°C~18°C	Frankfurt	1°C~8°C	Luanda	24°C~32°C
Taipei	20°C~27°C	Singapore	26°C~31°C	Vancouver	11°C~14°C	Maputo	23°C~33°C
Guangzhou	20°C~25°C	Kuala Lumpur	26°C~32°C	Paris	3°C~10°C	Dili	23°C~34°C
Nanjing	14°C~16°C	Jakarta	26°C~34°C	Moscow	3°C~3°C	São Tomé	24°C~33°C
Guilin	16°C~18°C	Seoul	10°C~15°C	Las Vegas	12°C~24°C	Praia	25°C~31°C
Xi'an	7°C~16°C	Sydney	21°C~28°C	Monte Carlo	13°C~20°C	Bissau	24°C~34°C



A body sticker of Team Puerto Rico is seen on the leg of Puerto Rico's Jesfred Joel Torres Santiago after winning the gold medal at the Boxing Men's 60kg Final Gold Medal Bout #98 during the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games at Dakar Expo Center (CICAD) in Diamniadio, Senegal yesterday. - AFP



Zhang Zhengkun (left) of China competes during the boxing men's 60kg semifinals against Jesfred Joel Torres Santiago of Puerto Rico at the Dakar 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games in Diamniadio, Senegal, on Wednesday. - Xinhua



Chen Ziyan of team China competes during the round 3 Balance Beam of the Artistic Gymnastics Mixed Team at Dakar 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games at Dakar Expo Center in Diamniadio, Senegal, on Wednesday. - Xinhua



Ireland's Kristian Jubani and India's Ambekar Meetei Lairenlakpam (unseen) compete at the Boxing Men's 50kg Final Gold Medal Bout #97 during the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games at Dakar Expo Center (CICAD) in Diamniadio, Senegal yesterday. -AFP



Players compete during the Women's Placement Matches 5-8 of beach handball between China and Mexico at the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games in Saly, south of Dakar, Senegal, on Wednesday. - Xinhua



The Olympic rings are seen on the fingernails of bronze medallist Canada's Mehreen Khakh at the Boxing Women's 51kg Final Gold Medal Bout #95 during the Dakar 2026 Youth Olympic Games at Dakar Expo Center (CICAD) in Diamniadio, Senegal yesterday. - AFP